

Brewster

*The Hill Tribes of Fiji*

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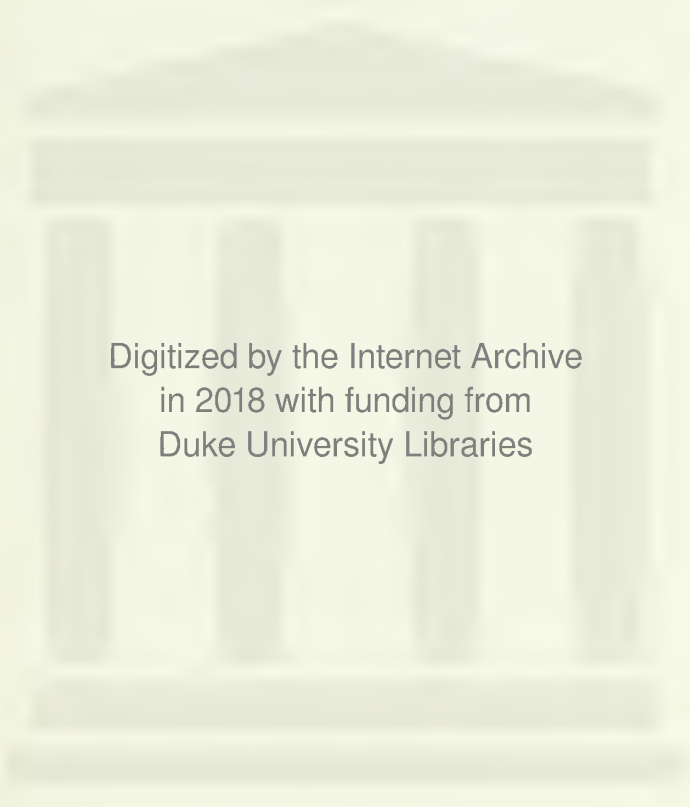
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# THE HILL TRIBES OF FIJI







### A FISHER GIRL

gazing sadly seaward and praying that her lover in the turtle fleet may escape the horrible penalty exacted from those who fail to make the catch demanded by the Ratu.

*Photo by J. H. Waters, Suva.*

# THE HILL TRIBES OF FIJI

A RECORD OF FORTY YEARS' INTIMATE CONNECTION  
WITH THE TRIBES OF THE MOUNTAINOUS INTERIOR  
OF FIJI WITH A DESCRIPTION OF THEIR HABITS IN  
WAR & PEACE, METHODS OF LIVING, CHARACTERISTICS  
MENTAL & PHYSICAL, FROM THE DAYS OF CANNIBALISM  
TO THE PRESENT TIME

BY

A. B. BREWSTER, F.R.A.I.

*Governor's Commissioner for the Provinces of Tholo North & Tholo East & Deputy  
Commandant of the Armed Native Constabulary of Fiji*

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS & MAPS

PHILADELPHIA  
J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY  
LONDON: SEELEY, SERVICE & CO., LTD.

1922

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JOHNSON REPRINT CORPORATION  
111 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10003

JOHNSON REPRINT COMPANY LTD.  
Berkeley Square House, London, W. 1

Reprinted from a copy in the collections of  
The New York Public Library  
Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

*Landmarks in Anthropology*, a series of reprints in cultural anthropology

*General Editor:* Weston La Barre

First reprinting, 1967, Johnson Reprint Corporation

Printed in the United States of America

5727611  
B8-254  
C-2

TO  
MY WIFE

## AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT

My grateful thanks are due to the Editors of the *Field* and *Graphic* for their kind permission to reproduce photographs which have already appeared in their columns and to those friends who have been *yalo vinaka* (soul good or good natured), as the Fijians say, in revising my manuscripts so patiently and versifying the native rhymes.

A. B. BREWSTER.

TORQUAY, *July*, 1922.



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## NOTE ON PRONUNCIATION

**W**HEN Messrs. Cargill and Cross, the pioneer Wesleyan missionaries, arrived in Fiji there was no written language. They immediately started to construct one, the work being carried on by their colleagues until their labours were concluded in 1850 by the Reverend D. Hazlewood, who brought out *A Fijian and English Dictionary*, which also contained the necessary syntax and grammar, and it has remained the standard authority on the native tongue. Tradition has it that an eminent Italian grammarian arranged the pronunciation of the alphabet and gave it the sound of his own country. As this differs from our English way it has led to much cavilling and an attempt by some modernists to introduce a different method.

*A* in Fijian has the sound of that letter in French or Italian, or in our word *father*.

*B* universally in Fijian is sounded as *mb*. For instance, *bebe*, a butterfly, is pronounced *mbembe*. For the convenience of English readers this letter has been written *mb*, and all words commencing with *b* must be looked for under *m*.

*C* in Fijian is the equivalent of our *th*. Thus *ca*, evil, bad, wicked, is pronounced as *tha*. King Thakombau and Tholo, so often mentioned, are spelt in Fijian, Cakobau and Colo respectively, and are rendered in this book in the English fashion.

*D* has the sound of *nd*. Thus *dada* rotten, is pronounced *ndanda*.

*E* has the sound of our English *a*.

In pure Fijian there is no *f*, but *v* is used instead. However, in Tonga it is vice versa, and the Eastern or Lau Archipelago is

largely impregnated with Tongan blood. In Viti Levu people talk of *vakaviti*, or according to the custom of Viti. In the eastern islands they say *fakafiji*, or Fiji fashion.

G has the sound of *ng*. Hence the word *gadinana*, a mother's brother, is pronounced in English as *ngandinana*.

H is not used at all except about *nandrong-a* and in the southwestern parts of Viti Levu, where at one time there has been a strong Tongan impact. They employ it there where in other localities the letter *s* occurs.

I has the sound of our English *e*.

J as in English.

K as in English.

In pure Fijian the letter *p* is seldom used, the natives employing *v* instead. However, in the Lau and eastern islands of the group, where there is a strong Tongan influence, *p* is used instead of the *v* of Viti Levu and the western portion of the islands. For instance, *vata*, together, alike is rendered *pata* in the parts nearest to Tonga. Words of foreign origin retain the *p*, which is, however, frequently turned into *v*. *Pusi*, a cat, in Western Fiji is usually rendered *vusi*, and fireman becomes *vaiamani*.

Q should be sounded as *ng* hard, and is in contradistinction to our *g*, which *ng* is soft in Fijian. In fact, *q* has much the same sound as our *g*. Therefore in this narrative the letter *q* has been retained.

Y is pronounced as *ya*.

# The Hill Tribes of Fiji

## CHAPTER I

### Fijian Treasures: Tambua, Yangona & Pigs

**T**O understand, in a way, the working of the Fijian mind, something should be known about the things the native considers most worth living for. The white man's toast, "Women, wine and song," is rendered by the primitive hill men of Viti Levu (Great Fiji) as "Tambua, yangona and pigs," which constitute in their eyes the joys of riches, strong drink and feasting.

*Tambua* are the teeth of the cachalot or sperm whale. They are pure ivory, intrinsically weight for weight as valuable as elephant tusks. With constant oiling and polishing they assume a very handsome appearance and in the eyes of the Fijians, unacquainted with gold and precious stones, they seemed the most beautiful things in the world. When Great Britain assumed the reins of government, the native officials were paid regular salaries in sterling coin of the realm. One of them, an old-time gentleman, the Roko Tui, or Lieutenant-Governor of the Island of Kandavu, requested that his recompense might be made in *Tambua* or whales' teeth, as in his estimation they were much more chief-like than mere money. He added that in the days of his unregenerate youth he had assisted in the capture of a trading brig, which had a certain amount of gold coin on board. Not understanding its value then, he and his companions utilised the coins in matches at "ducks and drakes," which the Fijians play in the same way as we do, thus dissipating their fortune according to our own homely proverb.

*Yangona* is the plant known botanically as *Piper methysticum*, the root of which, when pounded up, mixed with water and strained,

forms the national beverage of many of the South Sea Islands. It is better known to us as *ava* or *kava*, which is its name in Tahiti, where it was seen by Captain Cook, from whom we derive principally our nomenclature of the products of that part of the globe. It is mildly stimulating, a soporific, and highly valuable medicinally in certain cases. Speaking for myself, I always have found that the feverishness and inability to sleep, engendered by a long day's exposure to the tropical sun, was calmed and soothed away by a draught of good *yangona*, and how sweet tobacco was afterwards!

*Kava* drinking is considered by many to be a disgusting ceremony from the supposed method of its preparation. The popular idea is that its roots are chewed up, spat into a bowl, infused with water and served out for drinking in coco-nut shell cups. That is the Tongan method, the mastication being done by pretty young girls, whose beauty is supposed to counteract the filthy method of production. In the beginning and middle of the past century Fiji was nearly conquered by Tongan adventurers, and they were only prevented from doing so by the intervention of Great Britain. They succeeded in introducing many of their customs, and amongst them their fashion of preparing *kava*. The ancient Fijian way was to pound up the roots with stones, and the whole process was done by young men. Priests when supplicating the ancestral gods and praying for the welfare of the tribe, figuratively mentioned the youthful warriors as *ling-a yangona*, i.e. the hands that brewed the *yangona* or *kava*. When Fiji became a British Colony the medical officers objected to the chewing of the national drink on sanitary grounds. We were at once assured by the people that they would willingly return to the orthodox ancient method of pounding it.

A pig is but a pig of course, but they were the largest and most valuable of the Fijian domestic animals, horses, cows and sheep being unknown until the advent of the *vavalangi* or white foreigners. One of the most affectionate compliments ever paid to me was, when on one occasion I was likened unto a pig. I had been absent for six months, and on returning to my district I was greeted by a large gathering of the people and presented with the complimentary gift of *tambua*, or whales' teeth, customary on such an occasion. The *Mbuli* or head man of Tavua was the spokesman, who delivered this little speech: "This, sir, is to express our joy at seeing your face once more. When you went away, who can say how desolate we felt! We were like unto a litter of little pigs bereft of the old sow, their mother!!!"

With great lack of chivalry my friends the hill men omitted



women from their list of valuables. One of them, Ro Seru, the chief of the very important clan of Vunangumu, a notorious old cannibal, put the matter succinctly in a conversation with Mr. Walter S. Carew, the Resident Commissioner of Tholo East, or the Eastern Highland province of Viti Levu (Great Fiji), who some forty-five years ago had so much to do with the pacification of the erstwhile cannibal tribes of the interior. "Ah, Mr. Carew, my friend," exclaimed old Seru, "women are no good, not to be compared to a good pig. But they have their uses in the way of cooking food, plaiting of mats, making of *masi* (native bark cloth) and washing of clothes. As I observe you have no one to perform such offices, I shall have much pleasure in giving you one of my many wives." The Resident Commissioner, renowned for his sense of humour and ready tact, parried the embarrassing offer by wittily replying, "My friend! how can I accept a gift which you hold in such small esteem? It would dishonour us both, for you to give and for me to take it." The old man laughingly accepted the mild rebuke with the usual Fijian admission, "That is true, sir."

The Fijians say that it is difficult to decide which of their three treasures, *tambua*, *yangona* or pigs, they prize the most. In explanation they cite the following little fable as to their quarrel about precedence. The native is fond of politeness and ceremony, and to each of the actors he gives the title of "Ra" in speaking of them, which is equivalent to our "My Lord or the Honourable."

One day, Ra Tambua, or My Lord Ivory Tooth, went down to the pool in the stream where he was accustomed to take his bath and found the water dirty and befouled. "Who," said he indignantly, "has put this insult upon me?" A useful boy, within ear-shot, answered, "It is Ra Yangona (My Lord Kava) who is washing himself up above."

"Oh!" exclaimed disgustedly Ra Tambua. "What is Ra Yangona but a dirty mass of tangled roots?"

"Quite so," replied Ra Yangona. "But when I am brewed and await the pleasure of the chiefs in my great bowl, they quaff me with pleasure and acclaim me with loud shouts."

On another occasion the positions were reversed, and it was Ra Yangona who complained of the state of the stream and was told that Ra Tambua was the culprit.

"Oh!" said the enraged would-be bather, "who may Ra Tambua be? He is but a senseless misshapen thing, with sharp points at each end with holes in them, through which a piece of string is passed."

"Just so," retorted Ra Tambua. "But when the chiefs congregate for great and solemn ceremonies, I am displayed aloft, and then the people regard me with the greatest admiration and show their wonder and regard by long and reverent exclamations of 'Woi, woi, woi!'"

When My Lord the Pig befouled the waters of the stream he was stigmatised by the other two of his rivals as a dirty, ill-bred befouler of villages and rooter-up of food cultivations.

"True, true," admitted he. "Nevertheless, when I am cooked whole, and displayed on top of the big baskets of yams and taro as the mainstay of the feast, I cause the mouths of the multitude assembled on the village green to water, and they greet my appearance with much applause."

Pigs and *yangona* are the same to the Fijian as the roast beef and beer to Old England. *Yangona* drinking is really of the nature of a religious ceremony and partaken of with great reverence and ceremony. In pre-Christian days the first cupful of the brew was poured out at the foot of the main kingpost of the *Mbure*, or tribal hall, as a libation to the ancestral gods, the spirits of their forefathers. On the accession of a chief to the sovereignty of the tribe, though he succeeded by hereditary descent as a rule, he was not secure in his position until the clansmen had ratified it by a solemn ceremony known as *veimbuli*, or the right of election on the part of the people. Chiefs have been known as the nominal heads of their tribes for considerable periods without having been confirmed as such by the free choice of their vassals. Such a state of things rises, sometimes from a want of popularity, and sometimes on account of the expense of the proceeding. The community in the latter case may think it necessary to put a *tambu* on the pigs and other kinds of property until it considers enough has been got together to make a fit display at the great pageant enacted upon the occasion of a *veimbuli*. It is then that the *tambua*, *yangona* and the pigs come into their own, and make the great show of the day. First of all, the chief *mata* or herald of the tribe stands forth, holding aloft as big a bunch of *tambua* as the wealth and importance of the tribe permits, whilst the assembled people reverently exclaim, "Woi, woi, woi!" in token of great delight and admiration. Then in a set speech the herald announces the decision of the tribe to confirm their hereditary chief in his position of supreme authority. The chief then touches the *tambua* and they are handed to his own herald, or talking man, who accepts the presentation, and returns thanks on account of his principal. Then the *yangona* is brewed

with most solemn ceremonies, all the braves, warriors and elders sitting in a circle round the great *tanoa* or *kava* bowl and chanting the tribal drinking song. When every point of etiquette has been rigidly complied with, a flowing coco-nut shell, full to the brim, is taken by the cup-bearer, who dances up with it, with fantastic step and gesture, to the new hope of the people. It is a wonderful performance, as the bearer of the bowl must not spill a drop and seemingly never does. The chief tosses it off at one long draught, no heeltaps being the order of the day, and then, when he has drained his cup dry, he throws it down and makes it spin on the ground before him, and then all the people shout and acclaim him as their Sovereign Lord. Then my Lord the Pig makes his appearance, and feasting and revelry gladden the hearts of all.

Whenever a new Governor arrives in Fiji he has to undergo the process of the *veimbuli*. On his first landing the colonists take possession of him, and he is conducted to the Supreme Court, where the Chief Justice swears him in. His Honour having done his share, hands him over to the representatives of the natives assembled on the parade ground of the Constabulary, which is close to Government House. There the sacred *tambua* are duly presented to His Excellency, who has also to quaff the *yangona*. As we used to say out there shortly, we colonists swore him and the Fijians drank him in. As for My Lord the Pig, although he follows on as usual, the people deal tenderly with their newly appointed Supreme Chief by eating that part of the ceremony themselves. This is said advisedly, as all who know village life are aware that pigs do a good deal of the scavenging. Besides that, when brought in to grace the feast, baked whole on top of the big baskets of vegetables, just to create what the Fijians call a handsome appearance, they are hardly ever cooked right through, and when the masters of the ceremonies have carved and divided them out the flesh is generally boiled before it is eaten. The custom of so serving the pigs is due to My Lord the Earth Worm. One day the animals held a great council, and one of the problems propounded for discussion was :

“What would present the finest appearance on top of the big baskets of boiled yams and taro, and add the finishing touch to them when brought in for a feast ? ”

My Lord the Earth Worm immediately exclaimed, “Why, who else but Mr. Pig ! ”

His resolution was passed *nem. con.*, and pigs have ever been so used, consequently there has been never-ceasing enmity between them and the authors of their doom. That is why pigs root up the

ground in their continual search for, and destruction of, those who brought this woe upon them. In a certain way it is recognised that the pig is a dirty beast, therefore in most parts of Fiji, after he has been slain, the flesh of the snout is cut away and he comes to the feast showing a white and glistening array of bone and teeth in the region of his mouth. I was present at a great communal gathering once, when some of the villagers brought their quota of pigs for the great feast, which was, of course, a most important part of the function, without having dressed the noses and cheeks in the customary manner. The *Mbuli*, or head man, was furious and prosecuted the culprits before me "for conduct calculated to create a breach of the peace." He was one of my old-time friends, and had fought against the Government in Sir Arthur Gordon's "Little War."

Although the Fijians find it difficult to pronounce which of the three, *tambua*, *yangona* or pigs, is the most important, I should say myself, as an impartial observer, that the palm would be assigned to the *tambua*, or ivory whale's tooth. A subtle aura seems to emanate from it, breathing of mystery and religion. We are acquainted with the word *tabu* and its uses from reading the works of Captain Cook and other South Sea voyagers, and the rigour of its laws. It represents a greatly venerated and a most sacred system. *Tabu* is the Polynesian or Eastern Pacific form of the word. When we come to Fiji, where the Polynesians meet the Melanesians or Western Pacific natives, it becomes *tambu*, which means sacred or holy. Hence I take it that, used in the form *tambua*, as applied to the teeth of the cachalot in the present day, it means a sacred or holy symbol. Long before the ivory tooth of the sperm whale found its way to Fiji various forms of *tambua* were in use. Inland the hill men had pieces of polished hardwood, cut much in the shape of a banana, with holes at each end to permit of their being strung together in bunches. The coast people put various kinds of shells to the same purpose. It would take up too much space to go into the whole history of *tambua* here, and I only propose to deal with it as I found it in my time.

Some of the present-day *tambua* or cachalot teeth are of very great beauty, having been oiled and polished and kept in the seclusion of their special *kato* or baskets for many years. Such are looked upon as most holy, are jealously guarded and seldom seen except by the initiated, who know of their existence. I once by accident got a fleeting glimpse of one of these venerated objects. A chief in paying me a visit saw on my table a chalk head of a man, which had come from New Ireland. He looked at it curiously, and then

told me that he had something very similar. I asked him if he would show it to me ; he said he would, and returned in a day or two with an extremely ancient basket woven in rattan cane, such as one hardly ever sees nowadays. Inside, wrapped in old oily rags of bark cloth was a rude female image constructed from several sperm whale's teeth. The main trunk and head were carved from one tooth, to which was affixed, by means of leaden rivets, cut from bullets apparently, the legs and arms fashioned from smaller teeth. It was the most cherished possession of the Matailombau people, and was known as *Ranandi Waimaro* or the Queen of Waimaro, the district from which the tribe supposed they had emanated, and according to tradition it had belonged to them from time immemorial. It had been handed down from generation to generation, and the history of its arrival and the source from whence it had come had been lost in the mists of antiquity. It was only displayed on the most solemn occasions, and it should not have been shown to me. The man who brought it to me, a minor chief, was pronounced a weak-headed degenerate. He was deprived of its custody, and during the twenty years afterwards that I was connected with the tribe I never saw it again. Understanding the jealousy with which it was regarded, I made no attempts to do so and regretted my curiosity in the first instance. Incidentally, I would remark that the image was in no way looked upon as a god or worshipped in any form. Fijians are not idolaters, but worshippers of the spirits of their departed ancestors, who in the next world watch over the welfare of their posterity. Talking as we do in these present times, I should say that this ivory figure, the Queen of Waimaro, was but an extremely venerated mascot, or the "luck" of the tribe. In the first instance it was perhaps the work of some seaman on one of the early ships to visit the South Seas. Probably it was traded away and left in one of the groups to the eastward, and brought from thence by some of the light-coloured, straight-haired people of those parts, who from time to time made their way to Fiji, and who on account of their beauty and physical excellence were adopted as chiefs by the indigenous tribes, and so founded the principal families of the country.

*Tambua* are regarded by their owners very much as a girl does her dolls. They like to take them out, admire and talk about their beauty. They keep them in a special basket, and place a symmetrically shaped pebble in it. The latter is called *Tinai ni Tambua* or the mother of the whale's teeth. They are lonely if left to themselves, and will cry, especially at night, so they are provided with a mother to hush and comfort them. These stones by continual oiling and



polishing also become very pretty. A few were at times given to me, but, alas ! during my frequent migrations, probably being looked upon as mere stones, they have got lost.

Hardly any act of ceremony is possible without the exchange of *tambua*. When a youth seeks a wife, the request must be accompanied by the presentation of a whale's tooth and its acceptance constitutes a binding contract of marriage. Should it be desirable to get an obnoxious person quietly put out of the way, *tambua* are employed to effect the purpose. Their acceptance implies consent to the request, and then the bargain must be carried out with the strictest honour. It is extremely difficult not to take them, as not only are they coveted for their beauty and value, but it is also churlish and discourteous to refuse them. When a native falls down on his knees and holds forth a *tambua*, it should not be touched until one has heard the nature of the request, if it is one that can properly be granted or not. There is another act almost similar in gravity to the acceptance of a *tambua*, namely, that in which a person embraces one's knees and kisses one's feet. That, too, is supposed to confer a moral obligation on the part of the person so treated to carry out the terms of the petition. I was once on circuit in an out-of-the-way part of Viti Levu when an old woman dived into the house in which I was sitting, and before I could do anything she embraced my legs and kissed my feet, and then told me that her son was about to be impleaded before me for an offence, and that she begged his pardon and deliverance. He was, however, convicted and sentenced. Subsequently one of the old gentlemen of the place, who as a man of travel and known courteous disposition had been told off to entertain me, asked me confidentially why I had not let the youth off. I replied that he was guilty of the charge, and I could do nothing else.

"But," answered my old friend, Roko Lemba by name, "the old woman kissed your feet !"

## CHAPTER II

### A Fateful Tambua

**I**N September, 1870, the date of my arrival at Suva, on the island of Viti Levu, now the capital of the colony of Fiji, the natives there were already sincere and devout Christians, thanks to the Wesleyan Mission. About fifteen years previously, Thakombau, the titular King of Fiji, having embraced the new religion, his retainers and vassals followed his example, amongst whom were the people of Suva. By that time, also, all the maritime and island communities had abjured heathenism and cannibalism, and only the hill tribes of Viti Levu followed the old way. Some of these were quite close to Suva, as their villages were just across the hills on the western shore of the harbour, and their inhabitants came down every now and then to trade and to seek work with the new settlers. They were easily distinguishable by their enormous fuzzy-wuzzy heads of hair and scant clothing. The men only wore a strip of *malo* or bark cloth, passed between their legs and fastened round the waist like a sash. This get-up very much resembled that of the immortal Gungadin, "not very much before and rather less than half of that behind." Their women folk wore the *liku*, which was a narrow fringe of grass or fibre, tied by a string round the middle, which made quite a decent and respectable covering from the skilful way in which it was worn.

The proper name for these hill people is *Kai Tholo* or "from the mountains." The newly converted part of the population stigmatised them, however, as *tevoro*, which is a corruption of our word devil, whilst they called themselves the *lotu* or those of the Christian religion. The first act of those who abjured the old way was to shear off their enormous mop-like and closely matted masses of hair, a very necessary sanitary precaution enforced by the Wesleyan Mission. The ancient fashion was filthy in the extreme, breeding vermin, and the drainage from it caused chronic bloodshot and bleary eyes. The next thing was to adopt the *sulu* for their attire, or two yards of cloth, i.e. a fathom, according to the old native mode of computing length, as much as a man could stretch from hand to hand with his

arms held out. The new garment and its name came from Tonga, from whence arrived the first missionaries attended by some of their converts of that country. The *sulu* is hitched round the waist and falls in a graceful fold to the knee. It has remained the national dress of Fiji, and worn as uniform makes the armed forces of the colony look like our kilted Highland regiments. From these peculiarities of head and dress the settlers used to refer to the cannibal tribes as the *tevoro*, "devils," or the "big heads," and to the Christians as the *lotu*. It is a convenient way of talking of them, and in these pages I propose so to refer to them. Occasionally the newly converted would be guilty of backsliding, when they would revert to their old ways, let their hair grow big again and resume the ancient garb. This we shortly styled as "throwing off the cloth," in contradistinction to conversion, which we called "putting on the cloth."

We landed at Suva on a Sunday, just opposite the pretty little native church, and at once found out how devoutly the natives regarded the day, applying to it all the rigidity of the Sabbath. Just freshly landed, we were eager to buy bananas, oranges, green coconuts and all the luxuries of the tropics, but our demands were met by the stereotyped reply of *singatambu* (holy-day), and we got nothing. In accordance with the Wesleyan system, or Methodism, there was a native teacher in charge of the village who conducted the services in the church, and for three or four days of the week taught the children reading, writing and elementary arithmetic. They were recording then in a little ballad the murder of the Reverend Thomas Baker, who in July, 1867, had perished at the hands of the people of Vatusila, away in the western hills of Viti Levu. Fijians make rhymes and verses about every occurrence; it is their way of preserving historical events. Very wisely the Wesleyans have adopted the system as a method of instruction. As a District Commissioner the native teachers always asked me, when on circuit, to examine their schools, and I have heard wonderful songs and seen amazing dances descriptive of physical geography, history and arithmetic. I can only now recollect the refrain of the dirge in which the Suva children were describing the murder of the missionary:—

"Oh! dead is Mr. Baker,  
They killed him on the road,  
And they ate him, boots and all."

In after life, as the Resident Magistrate of their district, I became intimately acquainted with his slayers. At Nandarivatu, my headquarters in the province of Tholo North, we had a school where a



certain amount of education was given to the young gentlemen of the district. One of them was the son of the head chief of Vatusila, where Mr. Baker was killed. Our scholar was not alive at the time, but he had heard all about it from the old people. When I left Fiji in 1910 he had succeeded his father, and had become the *Mbuli* or head man of Vatusila. As such he was responsible to the Government for the peace and good order of his district. He was also an ardent Wesleyan, and under their system held services as a lay preacher. He and all his people were heartily ashamed of the misdeed of the tribe, and had erected a cairn where it occurred, around which they had planted the lovely scarlet-leaved native dracæna. The scene of it is a pretty valley, through which flows a sparkling brook which falls into the Waitoro, the main head of the Singatoka River. Just before I left the colony the Vatusila people held a great council and submitted a memorandum in which they stated their desire to grant in fee simple to the Wesleyan Mission the spot where Mr. Baker fell, with some two to three hundred acres attached as an act of atonement. I duly forwarded it with a favourable recommendation, which received the sanction of the Government, and so an earnest effort was made to wipe out, as far as possible, the stain upon the good name of the tribe. Whenever I passed the place and its rude heap of stones I was always reminded of that verse of St. Luke's: "Ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them."

Although they were heartily sorry for what they had done they hotly resented the accusation of having eaten the boots. They said they were not such fools, as they knew quite well that such were adjuncts of the *vavalangi* or white men, in the same category as their guns, powder, axes, knives, etc. They said, too, that they had no intention to harm the gentleman, but unfortunately a *tambua* reached them with a request that he should be put out of the way. This, coupled with an indiscretion on his part, accomplished his doom.

Mr. Baker, prior to his departure on his last journey, was living on the Lower Rewa, the big river of Viti Levu. Between there and where he was killed is interposed a rough and rugged country, then quite unknown and unexplored, entailing a long and fatiguing journey on foot, in which the great divide which separates the main water systems had to be crossed. Simultaneously with his start a *tambua* was despatched by one of his neighbours, a local chieftain, to the first of the heathen tribes on his way, asking the people of it to be *yalo vinaka* or good-natured enough to accept the sacred

symbol, and in return slay an obnoxious white foreigner, who was shortly to arrive amongst them. For some thirty years or so the sender of it remained unknown, but at last the fears and remorse, entailed by the sense of blood-guiltiness, and a train of illnesses and misfortunes, enforced a confession. When it was made the actual sender had long been dead, and the act of atonement was made by his eldest son, who considered that he was being visited for the sin of his father. According to native custom he made a *soro* or act of atonement to the Wesleyan Mission, when assembled in one of their synods or annual conferences. This was done by presenting a string of *tambua* to the assembled elders, accompanied by a confession of the transgression and a petition for pardon and absolution. This was of course granted, and thereby the uneasy conscience of the son felt purged of the crime of his father, or as the people themselves would put it in their native way, "thus his soul obtained relief."

In 1884, seventeen years after the tragedy, I was posted as Assistant to the Resident Commissioner of Tholo East, whose jurisdiction extended to the head waters of the Rewa River, and to the great divide over which the martyred missionary passed on his last and fatal journey. The people of the villages through which he went often talked about him and the mysterious *tambua* which accompanied him secretly. They greatly desired it, and it was discourteous not to accept and carry out its behest, but prudence and rough native statesmanship intervened. The *vavalangi* or dreaded white men, with their unlimited command of guns, powder and bullets, were best left alone, and each tribe refused to carry out the terms of the *tambua* and passed it on. At the same time they tried to dissuade their visitor from going on, earnestly begging him to return, assuring him that beyond their boundaries they could not guarantee his safety, and that his forward path was beset with great danger, but their admonitions fell on deaf ears.

After I had been in the hills about twelve years, and was Resident Commissioner of the Tholo North Province, it was rather quaintly borne upon me how circumspect some of the graver chiefs desired to be in any dealings with the white people. Sir John Thurston, who was then our Governor, had asked me to make a collection of the seeds of the various kinds of indigenous tomato, in furtherance of a request from the Agricultural Bureau of the United States. He himself was an enthusiastic and accomplished botanist, but was much too immersed in public affairs to undertake the task. So he passed it on to me, knowing that I too was a plant lover, and greatly

interested in native lore. Just then I was about to meet the head men and elders of my district, and took the opportunity of consulting them on this particular subject, after we had got through the business for which we had assembled. One after another they unfolded their stock of knowledge, but I observed that none of them mentioned the particular variety very much in vogue in the olden time, the *mboro ndina* or true spinach. Its botanical name is the *Solanum Anthropophagorum*, which explains the use to which it was put. Its leaves and fruit, the latter a small and somewhat aromatic berry like a tomato, are both edible, and I have used them both in my kitchen. It might be considered that cannibalism is a delicate subject, and one to be avoided, but as a rule my native friends would discuss it quite openly and freely, attributing it to the darkness and ignorance of the olden times. On this occasion they held back, and I perceived that they wanted a lead. So with a deprecatory air I said :

“Of course bygoness are bygoness, but what about the ancient spinach, the *mboro ndina* ?”

We had relaxed from formal business and were seated in a circle round the *yangona* bowl drinking *kava*. An old greybeard, one of the leading chiefs, looked solemnly round, eyeing each one of us slowly and separately, and then propounded this momentous question.

“What is the use of lying ? If the truth be known, I did eat part of Mr. Baker !!! It came about in this manner : As you all know, he was killed by the Vatusila people, to whom my mother belonged. They sent up one of his thighs wrapped up in banana leaves to my father, the Chief of Nandrau, whose successor I am. You will remember how careful he was (turning with a bow to me) not to have any friction with the white gentlemen. So he refused to have anything to do with this present, and ordered it to be thrown away. I and some other small boys got hold of it, and cut it up into small pieces and cooked it in a little *kovu* (bundles of leaves, which in native cookery take the place of our pudding cloths) done up with the proper spinach and so we ate it.”

This vegetable which always accompanied human flesh was considered very necessary on account of the supposed binding nature of the principal part of the repast, and spinach was thought to be the corrective.

Whilst I was pondering on the old gentleman's declaration and considering what I should say a slight silence fell upon us. One of the listeners, a neighbour and friend, desiring to show sympathy and not leave the last speaker out in the cold, exclaimed :

“Well, well, we were all a bad lot in those days, as for myself, I strangled my old mother !!!” Then, feeling the need of justifying himself to me, he continued :

“But you must know, sir, that I did not want to kill the old lady, I only acted in love and pity. She came to me and said :

“‘My son, I am now old and feeble, a nuisance to myself and a burden to you, my children, be well disposed towards me, make an end of me, and put me out of my misery.’”

“So I wound a fold of *masi* (bark cloth) round her neck and did as she desired.”

When Mr. Baker arrived among the Vatusila, they had no intention, at first, of accepting the *tambua* and killing him, but determined to pass it on as the other tribesmen had done. He sealed his own fate, however, by what his host considered a gross breach of good manners. The young chief, now the head of the tribe, whom I have mentioned as having been educated in the Provincial School at Nandarivatu, gave me their version of the affair. He said that when Mr. Baker arrived in their village he was hospitably received, and spent the night there. In the morning he produced a comb and used it in his toilet, and then laid it down on the mats. His host, the leading chief, picked it up and stuck it in his own fuzzy locks. He did it quite innocently, as property was, as regards ordinary people, in communal use, and the upper classes could certainly take anything they fancied. Native combs, too, were worn stuck into their owner's hair. They were very necessary appanages, from the verminous state of the big-heads, being constantly required for scratching. The knowledge of this probably offended the real owner's sense of cleanliness and decency, and he snatched it from the chieftain's head. He could not have committed any deadlier offence. The head is the sacred part of the body, and there dwells all the *mana* or mysterious power of a man. More especially is this the case in regard to a chief, as he is generally the shrine of the ancestral god, and as such is himself divine. He is the representative of his god-like forbears who have preceded him to the spirit world, and whose worship he has to perpetuate here on earth. As such, when he moves about among the people, he is accorded the *tama* or sacred acclamation, as the holy father of the tribe. So revered is his head that none but the hereditary priests can dress it. After doing so they must not handle food, and have to use skewers with which to pass it to their mouths, or have to be fed. The divinity of the chief's head by contact entered their hands, rendering them *tambu*.

The insult to the chief's honour, and the covetous desire for the

beautiful ivory *tambua* sealed Mr. Baker's fate, and it was decided that the request accompanying the whale's tooth should be carried into effect. Shortly after leaving the village, at an appointed spot, he fell under the battle axe of one of the chief's henchmen, and the body was taken back to the village and displayed in the *rara* or public square. An ancient chieftainess came and seated herself by the corpse and endeavoured to arrange it for burial, begging that it might not be put to the usual purpose, and prophesying woe to the tribe for the evil deed. The narrator who told me this said they had good cause to remember her predictions, as nothing but woe and evil fortune had dogged them ever since. In vain were her petitions; the ruthless law of the vanquished was applied, and the body was eaten in accordance with immemorial tradition.

This fateful *tambua*, but a simple whale's tusk, proved a veritable dragon's tooth, and the people of Vatusila and the sender reaped the whirlwind. Many innocent people died from its baneful effects, and through it much blood was shed. Thakombau, who by that time had become the titular King of Fiji, was induced to send up country armed expeditions to avenge the murder. His columns started from various sources, but they acted independently of each other, and were without discipline or cohesion, and with one exception were ambushed and cut to pieces before they ever got near their objective. One of them got wandering about in a part of East Tholo, to which I was afterwards posted, and through which Mr. Baker had passed, where the people had refused the *tambua* and had warned him not to proceed. An armed military force of tribesmen, other than their own, was not to be tolerated, and the hill men drew it into an ambush, from which but few escaped. I was shown the scene of it, a pretty little valley with a mountain brook, the waters of which, I was assured, ran blood on that memorable day.

As all these punitive expeditions failed, no immediate vengeance fell upon the people of Vatusila, and they were emboldened to commit attacks upon the white men, the cotton planters on the Mba or northern coast of Viti Levu. In 1871 they murdered Spiers and Mackintosh, whilst out duck shooting, and carrying their bodies into the territory of the Yalatina tribe, ate them there. A force of settlers recruited in all parts of the group assembled at Varoko on the 4th August, 1871, in order to avenge the deaths of their countrymen. They were accompanied by their island labourers from all parts of the Western Pacific. These were joined by a section of the people of Mba under one of their leading chiefs, who were to act as our guides and allies. They duly led us up into Yalatina where we came



into action with the tribesmen, who promptly burnt their village and dispersed amidst the rocks and glens of their rugged hills. It was no use hunting for the fugitives, and the first Mba Expedition, as it was called, returned to its base on the coast, having practically effected nothing. It was just as well from the point of justice. The Yalatina were not actually concerned in the murders. The Vatusila who were guilty of them committed a breach of neutrality by baking and eating the bodies at Yendu, a Yalatina village. The people there, no doubt, were accessories after the fact and with fatal Fijian insouciance participated in the orgy, but at the same time they were mortally afraid of their savage neighbours of Vatusila on whose borders they were. In any case the Expedition attacked the wrong place. Spiers and Mackintosh were eaten at Yendu and it was Thumbu that was burnt in retaliation. But there was no Intelligence Department, few of the settlers could talk Fijian, and the Mba allies led us to the nearest Yalatina village. That suited native ideas of vicarious justice, and absolved them from incurring the risk of a march into the dreadful Vatusila country.

Inland Viti Levu was then an unknown quantity. All that was known was that the people were cannibals, distinguishable by their lack of clothing and fuzzy-wuzzy mops of hair. Till the treacherous assassination of the two Mba planters, there had been peace, but after that misdeed a state of warfare started, and it was very much the fashion to fire at sight on the big-heads whenever they came down to the settled districts. Also the foreign labourers on the plantations joined in the fray. They knew that the hill people had killed two of their white masters, and therefore all beyond the boundary were potential enemies to be slain whenever possible, in accordance with South Sea custom. This was unfortunate, as many of the inland people, who hated and abhorred the Vatusila, often came down to visit their friends and relatives on the coast, and a reprisal by some Solomon Islanders on one of them was the cause of a very dreadful tragedy.

The planter on the Mba River nearest to the cannibal country was a Mr. Burns, who lived on a cotton plantation known as Vunisamuloa. Some little while after the first Mba Expedition he and his wife and family were massacred under very revolting circumstances, the little children being seized by their legs and their brains dashed out against the verandah posts of the bungalow. This outrage was perpetrated by people from Karawa, in the hills westward of Mba, who had no connection with the Vatusila, the offenders in the first instance, and was done in revenge for the death of one of



A LOTU OR CHRISTIAN FIJIAN OF THE PRESENT DAY.

His short hair and *sulu*, or waist cloth, show his renunciation of cannibalism

*Photo by J. H. Waters, Suva.*



FIJIAN ARMED NATIVE CONSTABULARY.

in *sulu* or kilts. The contingent at King Edward's Coronation were for a few days with the Gordons at Aberdeen, whom they regarded as *kai vata*, or relations, on account of the kilt





their young men who was killed and eaten by Burns' Solomon Islanders.

They were subsequently indicted for murder, the case being investigated in Levuka, then the capital of Fiji. I knew intimately the magistrate before whom they appeared. He was one of the old die-hards who came into the service in King Thakombau's time. He knew no law and wanted to know none. He told me he was much annoyed by the interferences of Mr. Edgar Leopold Layard, our British Consul, and a brother of the Nineveh celebrity. He appeared on the scene, I suppose, in the interests of the Solomon men, as Great Britain was the special protector of the Pacific Islanders who came to labour in Fiji. He kept ejaculating; "First of all establish your *corpus delicti*." To those not learned in the law it simply means that a murdered body must be identified. There are cases recorded in which people have been tried, convicted and executed for murders, the subjects of which have subsequently been discovered well and pursuing their ordinary avocations. Therefore it is now laid down that before a person is condemned to death, the body of the victim must be clearly identified. As the Solomon Islanders had eaten it, my old friend bitterly complained it was hardly possible to establish the *corpus delicti* when it had disappeared down the throats of the accused.

By that time, King Thakombau had, with the aid and assistance of the European settlers, established a settled form of government, one of whose first acts was to despatch a properly drilled force of Fijians, under white officers, against these rude marauders, who, with all the other cannibal tribes, were speedily subjugated. In accordance with South Sea custom, the conquered became, in theory at least, the slaves of their conquerors. With the vigilant British ships of war on the look out, the old practice could not be put into effect. At the same time, some punishment was due for the atrocities which had been perpetrated. The prisoners were therefore tried as rebels, and sentenced to terms of penal servitude, which was carried into effect by leasing them out as labourers on the cotton plantations. In 1874 Fiji was annexed by Great Britain, and proclaimed a Crown Colony of a severe type. Almost immediately these prisoners were released, told to be good and sent home. Two years afterwards they threw off the cloth and resumed their old habits, emphasising their contempt of the new régime and the British flag by attacking some of the Christian villages, killing and eating their inhabitants. Prominent in these raids were my friends of Vatusila. Sir Arthur Gordon, our first Governor, then made his campaign in 1876, which is known

as "The Little War," in which he finally and completely pacified the erstwhile wild tribes of inland Viti Levu. He used the Armed Native Constabulary of Fiji, aided by tribal levies under the command of Captain (afterwards Major) Knollys, the Governor's A.D.C., with a subsidiary column led by Mr. Arthur Lewis Gordon, a distant relative of His Excellency. They both were awarded the C.M.G. for their services. No Imperial troops were used—a very successful and inexpensive way of dealing with the insurrection—and Sir Arthur was justly proud of his achievement. In his various reports to the Colonial Office, and in a book which he published privately, he styled it "The Little War," a term always subsequently used by the old colonists when referring to the operation.

Of course, the Vatusila suffered more or less in their constant fights, but they regarded it much as our gallant allies across the Channel, "*A la guerre, comme à la guerre*," the usual fortune of war. Subsequently, when old age crept over the principal actors on this little stage, the pangs and ills attendant upon it were attributed to Divine wrath and vengeance. Then their consciences began to prick them, and they began to think of endeavouring to atone for the sins of their youth. This belief was greatly strengthened by a very dramatic incident which occurred at Tavua-i-tholo, on the Singatoka River, their head village, on Christmas Day, 1894.

It was the hot and wet season, in which there are frequent and sudden thunderstorms. When such occur the Singatoka rises rapidly, rolling down its channel in a solid wall of water. On the day in question the villagers were thatching a house. It is a noisy job, those on the roof shouting to the people below to hurl up the bundles of reeds, with which native houses in those parts are covered. Reeds have very sharp points, and are capable of inflicting nasty wounds. Those below throw them with much force, endeavouring to spear the thatchers above, who for their part exhibit their skill in catching the bundles as they fly upwards.

The leading spirit in this scene of hilarity and fun was the young chief, the eldest son of the head of the tribe and its future hope. The noise and excitement offended the sense of propriety of the Wesleyan teacher in spiritual charge of the village. He came and delivered a homily on the sin of disturbing the peace of Christmas, which should be observed with all the sanctity due to a Sabbath. The young chief laughed, and told him to mind his own business, which was the teaching and care of the school children, and leave the warriors alone. The heavy thunder shower, usual at this season in the afternoon, put an end to the work and brought the river down

in a heavy spate. Soon the flood from the hills filled the bed of the stream from bank to bank, breaking in waves of foam on the great boulders which obstructed its course. Then is the time for fun, and the young athletes show their skill and daring by jumping from rock to rock until the opposite side is reached. Foremost at this game was the young chief of Vatusila. But, alas! his foot got jammed in a crevice, and notwithstanding his frantic efforts he could not extricate it. In vain did his henchmen and relatives go to his assistance with *lianes* or bush-ropes to help him. He remained stuck, whilst the river continued to rise, breaking over him in showers of spray and finally drowning him and crushing his body.

All the neighbouring tribesmen wagged their heads and quoted Scripture.

"Ah!" said they, "'The wages of sin is death,'" and they of Vatusila mournfully concurred. They had not yet, however, completely reaped the whirlwind; the aftermath had yet to come. The heir of the tribe was buried with many heathen rites and ceremonies within the village precincts on the edge of the public square. Over his grave was built a handsome native house which was completely furnished with mats and the ordinary utensils of domestic life. He was interred swathed in the costliest mats procurable, and round his waist was wound a long sash of *malo* or native bark cloth, the badge of chiefly rank. It was enormously long, one end protruding from the tomb and carried out into the midst of the public square, where it was pegged down.

In conformity with ancestral worship, and for other reasons which will be explained presently, many of the tribes buried their dead under the floors of their dwelling-houses. The medical officers of the colony considered it a most insanitary custom, and a law forbidding it was passed. Notwithstanding this, the sepulchre of the young chief was turned into a sleeping house or *mbure* for some of the eldest members of the tribe, who in natural sequence soon would follow their young lord along the spirit road to the other world. They spread their mats over his tomb and, until his soul had finally wrenched itself away from the earthly tenement, they listened to the struggles below. At first the body strives to retain its ghostly occupant, and the strife between them is distinctly audible, but as decay sets in the fight becomes feebler, and when decomposition is complete the spirit triumphs and wings its way to the Holy Land.

The native police duly reported this infringement of the Burial Act and wanted to prosecute the head man or *Mbuli* of Vatusila. As he had become a good and loyal man I refused to allow any pro-

ceedings to be taken. The native conscience is tender, and the Fijians are fully assured that one's sin will always find one out. The Vatusila people had added yet another offence to their long calendar, having buried their young chieftain in contravention of the Government regulation, and, although the Resident Commissioner had condoned this breach of the law, Nemesis was yet to claim her own.

This unlawful burying took place in the hot, rainy season. In the following July, the winter time in the Viti Levu hills, all the heads and notables of West Tholo met at Tavua-i-tholo, the principal village of Vatusila, to hold the Provincial Council or local Parliament. The chief's residence, the *Vale Levu* or big house, was used during the daytime as the council chamber, and at night as my quarters. It was intensely cold for that part of the world, and on the night of which I am about to write the thermometer fell to 40 degrees Fahrenheit. The heavy river fog from the Singatoka swathed the houses in damp folds of white mist, and within the people piled logs on to their fires to keep themselves warm. About 3 a.m. I was awakened by what sounded like volley firing in a general action and by a frightful hubbub, as if "The club were in circulation," as the Fijians would put it. I looked out and saw a house in flames, the bamboo rafters of which, exploding from the hot air in their compartments, made reports like guns going off. Men with axes were dealing heavy blows on the grass walls to detach them from the building, causing the noise like fighting with clubs. I had hardly realised the scene before me ere my native servant Seru came bounding into my quarters, saying :

"Do not be alarmed, sir ; it is only a house on fire. Just stop where you are, and don't bother to take any steps or go outside to issue orders. It is merely a local affair ; let the people themselves settle it."

It was the *mbure*, the mausoleum of the young chief, and it was burned down altogether. The old greybeards within, owing to the intense cold, had piled log after log on to their fire, and had so set light to their quarters.

Public opinion pronounced the verdict. The young chief died because of the sins of his father, and his tomb was consumed by fire because it had been built in defiance of the law.

## CHAPTER III

### Viti Levu

**V**ITI LEVU, or Great Fiji, is the mainland of the group marked on the map of the world as the Fiji Islands. This designation, now in common use, we owe to Captain Cook, although the majority of the natives themselves call their country Viti. The great navigator, in his visits to the adjacent Friendly Isles in 1771 and 1777, now better known as Tonga, saw parties of Fijians who used to sail thither in their large double canoes, for which they were famous. His hosts informed him that these strangers came from an adjacent archipelago to the westward, which they called Fiji. He accordingly adopted that name, and so it went forth to the world at large. Fijians and Tongans both speak dialects of the great Polynesian language, prevalent from the Marquesas and Tahiti in the east to New Zealand in the west. Nevertheless, their various inhabitants do not understand each other, as their talk differs as much as French, Italian and Spanish. Like them, however, many of the roots are common and some of the everyday words are identical. Frequently it means but the interchange of letters. Thus, where the Tongans use "f" and "j," the Fijians substitute "v" and "t," and say Viti instead of Fiji. Going further to the eastward, to Tahiti, we find that "h" takes the place of "v," and there they call our islands "Hiti."

The early Wesleyan missionaries, who were the first to bring Christianity to Fiji, helped to perpetuate Captain Cook's title, or shall we say error? After they had established themselves in Tonga they began to cast longing eyes on the neighbouring group, which their converts taught them to speak of as Fiji. Accompanied by some of them, Messrs. Cargill and Cross, the pioneers to the new field, landed at Lakemba, the nearest Fijian island of consequence, in 1835. There, owing to the frequent commerce and intercourse between the two groups, they found the Tongan pronunciation in vogue, and used the word Fiji in their first reports. Thus they, with



Captain Cook, settled the name of the cluster of islands which is now the colony of Fiji.

Viti, without doubt, is the common name used by the majority of the Fijians. No scholar of the language, either in speaking or writing, would think of employing any other word. The native monthly magazine, or newspaper, published by the Government, bears this on its title-page : "*Na Mata, Ai Vola I Tukutuku Vakaviti*," which in English means : "The Messenger, A Letter of News after the manner of Viti." When I first became acquainted with the country the natives thought their country the biggest in the world. When new-comers differed from them on this point, they roundly called them liars. That was fifty years ago, and in the meantime the slow but steady pressure of education afforded by the Mission Schools has taught them otherwise. Before I left England, in the time of the China clippers, with their cargoes of old-fashioned lead-lined tea chests, boys used to collect the linings, melt them down and throw the molten metal into water. This used to make it fizz and splutter, like lava when it flows into the sea, and assume as many fantastic shapes. Fijian lads soon learned this also, as most of the chiefs and men of importance possessed pigs of lead and bullet moulds for the casting of the round balls required for the old smooth-bore muskets used in tribal warfare. When a glimmering of the truth began to filter through as to the size and importance of Fiji in regard to the rest of the world, a young native gentleman of the highest rank, a grandson of King Thakombau, said to me one day :

"After all, what are our islands in regard to other countries? They are only like those little jagged forms and shapes that we boys made when we used to throw the dregs of molten lead into water, when we helped our fathers to cast bullets!"

Anyone who has seen the ragged sierra and jagged volcanic peaks and spires of the inland scenery of Viti Levu and the Fijian Isles in general will recognise the aptness of the simile.

By the time I joined the Colonial service in 1884 most of the village schools were equipped with large maps of the world, and of the principal continents and countries. The children attending them quickly picked up a very fair knowledge of elementary geography, of which one day I was given a practical demonstration whilst on circuit in the very heart of Viti Levu. We had just scrambled up to an elevation of some 3000 feet, to the great divide which separates the Wainimala, one of the head waters of the Rewa, from the Singatoka River. It was before the days of made roads; there was only a track, at which even a goat would probably have remon-

strated, but was, nevertheless, dignified by the name of a "path" in the official handbook. Breathless and panting, we flung ourselves into the bed of bracken and giant club moss which clothes Koroleva-leva, the name of the ridge to which we had attained. Up there the cool fresh air, as exhilarating as champagne, soon revived us, and ere long my guides and companions lit up their home-grown tobacco, rolling it up in the thin, soft dry leaves of the particular sort of plantain, the *seleuka*, by which name native cigarettes are known. After a while, when their fragrance had spread around, a few sighs of contentment arose and a little ripple of talk, the baggage-carriers indulging in a few comments on the nature of their job and the country we were passing over. They were couched in such a polite reference to our race that I expect they were meant to be overheard and intended for my benefit.

"Ah!" said they, "our white gentlemen lie, do they not? They mark our islands on the map of the world as a few mere specks. Just let them try what it is to carry baggage across Viti Levu!"

They were not without reason, as it is no mean island, being ninety miles from east to west, and sixty-three from north to south, with an area of 4112 square miles. It is about the same size as Jamaica, or, to bring it nearer home, about equal to the collective area of Kent, Sussex, Surrey and Middlesex. Like the shapes assumed by the molten lead thrown into water, the hills are broken up and fantastic, except Tomanivei, the main central mountain, which is a round fertile mound of earth, like a mother's breast. In her swelling bosom rise the principal heads of the Rewa and Singatoka, the great rivers of Viti Levu, and is the reason of the name "Tomanivei," which means "bubbling or springing from whence?" This derivation was explained to me by Ratu Jona Uluinatheva, the Wesleyan native minister of my district, when he and I, with a party of the local inhabitants, made the ascent of the mountain. He was an educated and cultured native gentleman, learned in his own language, and his derivation may, I think, be accepted without reserve. It is explained by the great number of springs, which everywhere abound, making the slopes there like a vast sponge. Those on the north and west go to form the Singatoka and Mba Rivers, whilst the rivulets on the south and east fall into the Rewa.

The first to climb Tomanivei was Sir John Thurston in 1885, then our Governor. He ascended from the west, and only reached the minor summit. He then wrote to me and desired that I should approach it from the east. I did so on April 30th, 1886, and succeeded in reaching the main elevation. There I made some inter-

esting discoveries of which I hope to give some details later on. We were very patriotic in those days, and all held our Sovereign Lady Queen Victoria in the greatest love and veneration. In my zeal I called our big hill "Mount Victoria," after Her Majesty, and so it is to be found on the ordnance survey map to-day. The natives, with their usual loyalty, at once adopted the new name, which, however, they euphonised into *Ului Vikatoria* or "Victoria's Crown." Subsequently I was instrumental in cutting a bridle track which joined together Tholo North and Tholo East, two of the highland provinces. It passed through the gaps in which rose the Singatoka and Rewa Rivers, and this part I named "The Queen's Pass," which the local people translated into *Tambale ni Ranandi*, which, in my idea, sounds altogether prettier than our way of putting it. I love the old native names, and only in these two instances was I guilty of substituting our own. I did it for political reasons, as, at that time, there was a strong latent tendency towards the old beliefs and customs, of which cannibalism was, of course, the bedrock. As this narrative proceeds I shall endeavour to explain the position.

The interior of Viti Levu is broken and rugged, traversed by steep ranges of upheaved volcanic mountains, intersected by deep valleys, gorges and cañons, through which flow the head affluents of the Rewa, Navua, Singatoka and Mba Rivers. The first three discharge themselves on the southern coast, and the latter on the northern. There are besides hundreds of minor streams. The island has this peculiarity: all along the northern and north-western coasts there are short plains nowhere over ten miles in length between the sea and the foothills. Then the mountains rise sheer to about 2000 feet, when a short plateau intervenes, and we come to the main range, which culminates at Tomanivei, or Mount Victoria, 4550 feet above the sea. From thence, as the crow flies, there are about fifty miles of undulating country, until the sea is reached on the southern coast. These long slopes catch all the moisture brought up from the Pacific by the S.E. trades. They form the weather side of the island, and account for the heavy rainfall there, which fills the long, navigable southern rivers. The clouds spend themselves before they cross Mount Victoria, and from thence to the northern beaches is the lee and dry side of Viti Levu. The distance thither is only some fifteen miles in a direct line. Consequently, the northern rivers are but short, fierce and angry when fed by the frequent thunderstorms of the wet season, and reduced in size during the dry season.

Nandarivatu, the hill station and sanatorium which I had the honour of founding, and where I lived for eighteen years, stands on





GIRL WITH TOMBE OR LOVE-LOCKS.

These locks are a mark of virginity, cut off after marriage. The jealous Tavua men shore off those of their maidens who flirted with the soldiers from Nandariyatu.

*Photo by J. H. Waters, Suva*



A TAKIA OR LIGHT-DRAUGHT CANOE.

Used on the headwaters of the Viti Levu rivers. The *vulevule* or little thatched house, protects the travellers from sun and rain.



an escarpment facing the northern coast, at an elevation of 2700 feet. It was the headquarters of a small detachment of the Armed Native Constabulary of Fiji, the old A.N.C., as we familiarly called it. The original camp was laid out in the form of a square on a small plateau, on the upper or northern side of which were the officers' quarters facing a garden. The lower or southern side was occupied by the barracks and the parade ground. On the former is a little glen in which rises the infant head of the Tavua, one of the small northern rivers; it falls over the precipitous escarpment through a narrow cleft worn by the water in the hard volcanic rock. In the lower or southern camp is a small rill, one of the many heads of the Singatoka River, which finds the ocean at Nandronga, on the S.W. point of Viti Levu, after a long and wandering course. Five miles or so, as the crow flies, in the background, in a southerly direction, is Mount Victoria, over which passes the main mail track to Suva, the seat of government.

Standing, as it does, on the backbone of the island, and on the road which connects the southern and northern coasts, Nandarivatu is a good jumping-off place from which to describe the whole island. Northward, stretched at one's feet, are the low, undulating hills and grey, grassy plains which fringe the coast, cut up into fantastic patterns by the countless meandering brooks with the belts of trees and shrubs which mark their course. Then comes the deep blue of "the locked lagoon," ruffled by the true and constant S.E. trade, with its border of snow-white breakers on the reef outside, which separates it from the mighty Pacific. From her bosom rises the chain of the Yasawa Islands, whose jagged and fantastic forms are silhouetted against the northern sky, and beyond, looming on the far horizon, is Vanua Levu or the Great Land, the second in size of the group. A broad passage separates the Yasawas from Vanua Levu, marked on the southern side by Alewa Kalou, the Round Island of the Admiralty charts, through which the main ocean is reached. Captain Bligh, in his famous boat voyage in 1789, after the mutiny of the *Bounty*, escaped by it into the open sea, when he was chased by canoes from Waia, one of the Yasawa Islands. On its high volcanic peaks were always sentinels watching for canoes or other craft in distress. Such were lawful prey, "those with salt water in their eyes" being doomed by the ancient law to the bamboo knives, the heated stone ovens and the cannibal maw. With what pangs must those weary, sea-worn refugees from the *Bounty* have looked upon the cooling brooks falling in cascades over the volcanic cliffs, and the glossy, green groves of breadfruit, coco-nuts and bananas of

the fair and fertile isles by which they passed. We can see by Bligh's charts how close they were to some of them, yet from the savage nature of the inhabitants they dared not land. Often and often, as I took my evening walk to the edge of the precipitous cliffs to watch the setting sun as it dipped away beyond the Yasawas, have I thought of that brave voyage of nearly 4000 miles in the *Bounty's* boat.

Not only through Nandarivatu passes the main mail track, but also the *Tuleita*, the spiritual road, over which pass the shades of the dead after they have departed this life in the southern and western parts of the island. They go by it to the Holy Land, or Mount Olympus of Fiji, the shrine of the great Ndeng-ei, the creator god. Many and dire are the tribulations they meet with ere they reach the myrtle groves of Nakauvandra, the abode of the gods. It lies a little to the eastward of Nandarivatu, on a rocky volcanic spur which juts out into the sea on the Ra coast. This abode of bliss, and the path which leads to it, must be described in another chapter, as it is quite a long story by itself.

Turning southwards, along the material prosaic track to Suva, fairly level country is encountered, with glades of forest and open stretches of moorland, until the western slopes of Mount Victoria or Tomanivei are reached. They flame with scarlet and orange when it is the season for the *vung-a*, the native myrtle (*Metrosideros Collina*), to flower. Their kindred grow, too, in New Zealand, of which the omniscient Kipling sings in his *Ballad of the Flowers* :—

“Buy a blood-red myrtlebloom,  
Buy the kowhai's gold  
Flung for gift on Taupo's face,  
Sign that spring is come—  
Buy my clinging myrtle  
And I'll give you back your home!  
Broom behind the windy town; pollen o' the pine—  
Bell bird in the leafy deep where the *ratas* twine—  
Fern above the saddle-bow, flax upon the plain—  
Take the flower and turn the hour, and kiss your love again!”

Never, to my knowledge, did the poet visit Fiji, yet the above is a perfect description of the country behind Nandarivatu. Often have I ridden saddle deep in the fern there and heard the bell birds calling where the *ratas* twine, and smelt the pollen o' the pine. Every now and then giant and hoary *ndakua* trees are met, which are almost identical with the kauri pine of New Zealand and produce a similar gum and emit the same aromatic perfume. It is supposed that the two countries were joined together in prehistoric times, and

are now the remains of a vast submerged continent. Geologically and botanically they have much in common.

At the eighth mile-post out from Nandarivatu the Queen's Pass is entered, and near the middle of it is a small and clear spring, welling forth with delicious icy cold water. Here we usually halted for lunch when on the long ride across the great dividing range from north to south. It was shaded by tall ferns, and all around were trees on whose boughs, every here and there, could be caught flashes of scarlet and orange, the flower of the *Dendrobium Moblianum*, an orchid quite common when the 2000 feet limit has been reached. Should it happen, too, to be the season for the flowering of the myrtles, the whole place would be alive with twittering parrakeets, many kinds of finches and humming birds, that seek their food in the blossoms. This part of the pass looks towards the west, and one can see miles and miles of the open grass country of the West Tholo province, backed by jagged sierra and broken ranges.

This little spring is the source of the Nasongo, one of the many tributaries of the Rewa, the great southern and eastern river. A little to the right can be seen the Singatoka, which finds the sea to the south-west. Just across the further slope of her wooded valley rises the Mba, the river of the northern coast, and away in the distance may be seen the silver streaks which mark her upper reaches. Standing here and seeing so many streams, one understands that Tomanivei is a veritable Mother of the Waters.

Just beyond this infant head of the Nasongo is the southern end of the pass, and beyond it lie, fold upon fold, the long, wooded slopes as they fall away to the great valley of the Rewa and all sight of the sea is lost, and it is easy to imagine oneself on a large continent. For miles the track winds through and round the hills, corrugated like sheets of galvanised iron, whilst below the baby Nasongo fights her way. At first her course is easy as she flows through the soft, fertile earth of her mother's bosom. Presently, gathering size, she comes to volcanic cliffs, over which she dashes in a series of falls and cascades, fretting and chafing against the huge boulders which obstruct her, dashing her spray upon them, which is returned in glittering rainbows from the hardy shrubs and ferns which cling to the dark grey stones. Onward she cuts her way through deep cañons of igneous rock and basalt, many of which are honeycombed with caves. The mouths of some of these may be seen neatly walled up with loose stones. They are the last resting-places of the tribal elders, and denote the approach of human habitations. The stream begins to widen and little glens and glades open out, with backgrounds of



forest, behind which rise grey cliffs and crags. Glossy green and grey, with the silver of the stream, are the prevailing tints. Fiji is not a country of precious stones, but beautiful pearls are found around her coasts. Some of these are grey and very lovely to behold, and might well be chosen as the representative jewel of the colony in the Crown regalia. The grey rocks, the green forest trees and the silver stream at their feet make a *toute ensemble* like Shakespeare's description of our own England :—

“ This precious stone set in a silver sea.”

It is in these glens that the hardy hill-men build their pretty and picturesque villages. The first on the main mail track, between Nandarivatu and Suva, is called Nasongo, embowered in groves of fruit trees, and gay with amaranths, crotons, dracænæ and other variegated shrubs. Along its eastern base flows the river, which takes its name from the Nasongo tribe, who dwell in this lovely spot. Here is a series of deep pools, delightful to bathe in, and small rapids. Across it rises sheer a grey precipice, over which a lover once leaped in search of the happiness which he thought was denied him in this world. The scene always brought into my mind those lines from *The Lays of Ancient Rome* :—

“ From that grey crag where, girt with towers,  
The fortress of Nequinum lowers  
O'er the pale waves of Nar.”

In the centre of these hamlets is a green called the *rara*, the public square, where the villagers meet for the performance of ceremonies and dances. It is generally planted with short, smooth, couch grass, which is carefully tended and kept in order, and fringed with brilliantly foliated plants. Ranged around is the *Mbure* or great tribal hall, where the men sleep and transact most of the business of the community. There, too, stand the dwellings of the principal chiefs, raised on mounds of earth, faced with pebbles from the river bed. These houses resemble our English farmyard ricks, and a correspondent of one of the leading Australian papers in the early days aptly described them as “ disembowelled haystacks.”

Here, right in the very interior, the streams are as yet unfit for even canoes, but gradually as they open out and broaden they become navigable for *takia*, the lightest description of native craft. Rapids still abound, obstructed by rocks, stones and snags, which make them dangerous for all but the inland folk, who are to the manner born and accustomed to these troubled waters. The coast men, expert seamen and canoe sailors, affect to despise the hill people and con-

temptuously call them *Kai Tholo*, which in its simple sense merely means mountaineers or dwellers inland. They look down upon them as lacking in culture and manners, which they themselves pretend to possess in a superlative degree. Skilful as they are on their own salt water, they cannot cope with the whirling rapids of the inland waterways. The Roman Catholic bishop and entourage once came into the hill country in canoes manned by coast men who, in their pride and naughtiness of heart, thought they could successfully surmount the dangers of the highland rivers. The result was that they swamped their episcopal charge, who was rolled down one of the rapids and bruised on the rocks. The Wesleyans, whose converts consider themselves true-born Britons, were the first in the mission field and greatly resented the intrusion of their rivals. The representatives of the latter were mostly Frenchmen, which contributed something of racial feeling to the feud. The difference in creed and nationality was hardly understood by the simple hill men, who came to the conclusion that the Wesleyans stood for Britain and the Roman Catholics for France. So much did this idea prevail that Wesleyan native offenders against the law of the colony thought that by changing their religion and seeking refuge in the compounds of the Roman Catholic missions they would be immune from punishment and under the protection of the French flag. Personally, as the magistrate of the province to which I was posted, I had actual experience of this. The head native Wesleyan teacher of the district where the accident occurred was also quite a bishop in his own small way, from the number of minor clergy and villages in his charge. The accident to the dignitary of the other Church gave him the opportunity of indulging in a little sarcasm. Putting on his best white starched shirt, black tie and flowing *sulu*, which used to be the pulpit get-up of his calling, he proceeded to call upon his native equivalent on the other side, a coast man. Addressing him, he said :

“Felipé, if you cannot take better care of your white gentlemen come to us Wesleyans, and we will do it for you. Do not think you can drown the Bishop with impunity because he is a Frenchman ! Should you do so, the British Government would assuredly hang you and all concerned. After all, you and I are fellow-countrymen, and I should not like so dire a fate to befall you.”

Our Fijian rapids have not the terrors nor the ferocity of those of continental rivers, as they lack their size and grandeur, but they require skill and local knowledge in their negotiation. This is possessed to perfection by the hill men, and in my many canoe journeys we hardly ever came to grief. Accidents will, however, occur, and

I have on occasions been swamped, but the danger incurred then was always small, usually meaning only the inconvenience of wet clothes and damage to one's belongings.

After getting clear of the rapids the head of steamer navigation is reached, and then commence the homesteads and plantations of the settlers. Along the banks are lines of light railways which convey the sugar canes to the central mills, whilst on the rivers powerful steam tugs with strings of barges behind do the same. Sugar is the principal product of Fiji, and the mills for its manufacture are fitted with the latest and most up-to-date appliances; they are lit by electricity, and the cane juice is treated in the most scientific method known. Down on these lower reaches of the rivers are the newest inventions of an advanced civilisation. Up above, on their head waters, dwell the simple hill men in their neat and pretty villages. There the communal *Mbure*, or tribal hall, is still occasionally lit by the kauri gum brought from the heart of the forest, or with bamboo and reed torches, though, to be strictly honest, it must be said that kerosene is rapidly ousting them, finding its way thither mainly by the patient efforts of the Hindu peddlers, who now conduct most of the petty commerce. Inland, or in Tholo, as the Fijians would say, witchcraft and the evil eye is still feared, and no one can expect to live and be healthy unless the very many difficult and devious customs prescribed by ancient tradition are complied with.

From the great central sugar mill at Nausori to Suva, our island city on the south coast, is but a few miles either by land or by water, where the big mail-steamers call, and it is the landing-place of the Pacific Cable, the All Red Line, which links us with the Empire. The Ordnance map of Viti Levu shows that it is but sixty-three miles between the northern and southern coasts, yet to travel between them entails a journey of one hundred and twenty. The steep and rugged mountains, over which the road has to zigzag, and the meandering rivers nearly double the distance.



## CHAPTER IV

### The Resident Commissioner

**W**HEN the "Little War" of 1876 was finished, Sir Arthur Gordon thought that the *kai Tholo*, the lately subjugated hill tribes, were scarcely fitted then for the rigidity of British Law. In his opinion they required to be dealt with slowly, partly in accordance with their own traditions, as far as they were good, and with our law, as far as it could be made applicable. He therefore caused an Ordinance, as we call Acts out there, to be passed in the Legislative Council of the Colony to provide for the jurisdiction of the "Lately disturbed districts of Viti Levu," as the preamble put it. This enactment established that they should be placed beyond the control of the Supreme Court, under Resident Commissioners, who should have all the powers of the High Court, subject only to revision by the Governor. They were to try by the aid of native assessors all indictable offences, such as ordinarily in other districts would be committed to the Supreme Court by the Stipendiary Magistrates. Four assessors were to sit with the Resident Commissioner in cases of murder, and two for other offences. They exercised the functions of juries and were supposed to give their advice in matters of native custom. This Act gave great powers and influence to the officers it created, and was always regarded with much jealousy by the members of the Supreme Court and the Bar. During an interregnum in 1897, when the Chief Justice was Acting-Governor, the Act was repealed and the Tholo Districts brought within the scope of the ordinary jurisdiction.

For administrative purposes the lately disturbed districts were divided into two Provinces—Tholo West and Tholo East. The former had been the theatre of the "Little War" in 1876, and there had been fighting in the latter pretty continually until as late as 1874. On the last occasion, however, when their kinsmen in the west in 1876 had been all ablaze, those in the east remained on the

Government side owing to the great influence exercised by their Resident Commissioner, Mr. W. S. Carew. In June, 1884, I was given a post under him and directed to report at his headquarters for duty. In those days, Fiji was an extremely poor Colony, and to give the higher officials anything like decent pay they had to hold a multiplicity of offices. In addition to being Resident Commissioner for Tholo East, Mr. Carew was a Commissioner of Native Lands, and as such a member of the Executive Council. He was also Stipendiary Magistrate for the district of Rewa, which was then the most important magisterial jurisdiction in Fiji. In it was the largest central sugar mill fed by extensive cane plantations, on which were employed great numbers of Indian coolies. They are, as is generally known, extremely litigious, and they took up most of the time of their judicial officer. So much was this the case that Mr. Carew could no longer reside in Tholo East, which he could only visit on special occasions. I was therefore made his Assistant there, and a Stipendiary Magistrate of the Colony, which gave me power to deal with all summary jurisdiction offences and those within the scope of the Native Regulations, in which had been codified the ancient customary law. All indictable offences were reserved for the Resident Commissioner's Court.

The Honourable Walter Sinclair Carew, under whom I was to have the honour of serving, was entitled to the prefix before his name through being a member of the Executive Council of the Colony. He was a very good-hearted rough diamond, somewhat inclined to eccentricity. Fortunately I knew him very well, as in the early days, before even the establishment of the Thakombau Government, we had been cotton planters, and had both served in the ranks of the first Mba Expedition, which endeavoured to avenge the deaths of Spiers and Macintosh, whom I have already mentioned as having been murdered in 1871 by the people of Vatusila. He was extremely expert in the language and manners and customs of Fiji. I have heard aristocratic Mbauans, the tribe to which King Thakombau belonged, whose dialect is that of polite society, into which the Bible has been translated and which is used for all Government proclamations and papers, express admiration for the purity and elegance of his diction. His career had been most romantic. His father was one of Nelson's junior lieutenants, who found himself placed on half-pay at the general peace on the cessation of the Napoleonic wars. Being of an enterprising nature he invested his small capital in a fine ship and made a modest fortune in trading ventures all over the world. In those days buying cargoes in distant

ports and selling them in others was most profitable. It was on one of these voyages that the gentleman, whose assistant I became, was born off the Cape of Good Hope. His early youth was spent there and at St. Helena until he came to England for his education. After that, like his father, he followed the sea, entering the mercantile marine. He was intimately acquainted with the South African ports and often told me about Walfisch Bay and Angra Pequena, when we were having our wrangle with the Germans about them. He acquired easily the dialects of the different places he had visited, and could speak Cape Dutch, French and German. When the Indian coolies made their appearance in Fiji, he speedily picked up Hindustani.

Nandurulolo was the name of the Government Station for the Rewa District. I landed there from a steam launch, and as I walked up the grassy knoll upon which stood the magisterial quarters I passed a big native policeman in undress, which means just a fringe of grass and leaves round the middle. With a sixteen-inch butcher's knife, the most beloved tool of Fijians, he was weeding the path. The Resident Commissioner, after he had greeted me, said :

"Do you see that chap there? My old black cat caught a rat last night, and that fellow stole it and ate it ! So he is just doing an hour's extra fatigue !"

From a Fijian point of view, this punishment was extremely right and correct. In robbing the cat, he stole from his master, and was guilty of the grossest disrespect to his superior officer, an offence punishable by death according to the ancient law. It was mean and selfish, too, to steal and eat the rations of a comrade, and a member of the same community, an offence in the same category as hoarding and stinginess. Before even King Thakombau's government the early missionaries introduced a rough code such as they had established in the Friendly Islands, from whence they brought it on to Fiji. This system was called the *Lawa Vakatonga* or the law after the custom of Tonga. Under it there was a judge, as he was styled, in every village. Every three months or so they would assemble in the principal centre of their district and hold a sort of quarter sessions. Mostly the proceedings were altogether oral, but there was, and is, a considerable literary and clerkly strain in many of the Fijians, and soon rough written notes of the cases were recorded, mostly in copy and exercise books. When we began to establish regularity we came across some of these old and curious records and found minutes of convictions for selfishness, for not sharing food with one's friends and comrades, and for stinginess. Those offences

were not in the Tongan code of the missionaries we may be sure, but they were punishable by the old customary law of the country.

There used to be a local song about "The dear old impecunious days when Thakombau was Rex." Even long after the British peace descended upon us Fiji was very poor indeed, and it is only within the last twenty years that the Colony has blossomed into its present affluence. Under His Fijian Majesty we were hard up indeed, and used to try and raise money in Australia and New Zealand. It was before the cable had been laid from England to those countries, and we were too far away to borrow in the home market. Only the monthly P. and O. boats visited Australia, and as far as my recollection goes no home steamers at all came to New Zealand. It was the era of the sailing ship. When we did get our neighbours to make advances, it was like getting a bill discounted by the proverbial money lender. Not much cash was forthcoming, a large percentage having to be taken out in kind. On one occasion, instead of the usual sherry and cigars, a lot of old East India Company's uniforms formed part of the proceeds of the loan. They were frock coats of an ancient type, very long and much bedizened with frogs and tags. In those days the various provinces of Fiji were presided over by native chiefs, who rejoiced in the titles of Governors or Lieutenant-Governors, according to the size and importance of their domains. On the acquisition of the uniforms just mentioned, the former were provided with those of Colonels and the latter with Lieutenant-Colonels.

One day Ratu Napoleon, the Lieutenant-Governor of Rewa, looked around the group of retainers assembled in the Vale Levu, i.e. the Big House, and said in the usual patriarchal style :

"Boys, I'm dreadfully hard up, there is positively not a coin in the provincial cash bag; it's absolutely empty, and I am at my wit's end to know how we can raise even a cent."

Many propositions were advanced as to how the pecuniary position could be improved, but for some time nothing practical was arrived at. At last one brilliant genius said :

"How would it do to hold a Court and fine somebody?"

Yes, that was a very fine idea, but who had got any money?

"Well, there is Watisoni, who has been working for some time for Mr. R——, and Peter, who is cook at Smith's Hotel; they were sure to have something."

"Good," said the Lord of Rewa. "Convene the Court and order the attendance of those two."

With fear and trembling the delinquents donned their best and

entered the Presence, in honour of which Watisoni had put on his best and only shirt. The Lieutenant-Governor, attired only in the long frock-coat with just a waistcloth underneath, glared at him, saying : " And how much money might you have ? "

Falteringly, his vassal answered, " Ten shillings, sir."

" Ho ! then you are fined ten shillings for hoarding, selfishness and oppressing the people ! "

The money was paid over at once, but so far from satisfying the over-lord, it only whetted his appetite.

" What ! " continued he. " Do I see one of my vassals with a shirt on, whilst I, the head of the clan, have no such thing wherewith to clothe my back. Off with it and hand it over."

Then might have been witnessed the scene of the Lieutenant-Governor, in all the glory of his uniform, putting the shirt over it in the way Fijians don such a garment. The method is to put the arms in first and then wriggle the head and body through the tail and neck part. Thus attired with the shirt fitting tightly over the Colonel's coat the next case was called. Peter was asked how much he had, and the trembling reply was :

" Only a dollar, sir."

He was promptly fined that amount, also for meanness, hoarding and being unjust to the community by retaining such a sum for his own private use.

Stinginess is abominable and should not be even thought of by decent Fijians. In one of the tribes amongst whom I dwelt, an incantation was said over newly-born babes to preserve them from that vice. Four days after birth the child is named, the ceremony in a way somewhat resembling baptism. A large *kava* bowl is filled with water in which are placed as many prawns and little river fish as the vessel will hold. The infant is held over it and sprinkled with water and given its name. The prawns and fish are then handed over to be cooked and distributed amongst the village children for a feast in celebration of the new arrival. This little rite is supposed to be symbolical of generosity, and that the recent addition to the community will always be prepared to share all things with his friends and comrades.

A youth named Thula was once tried in my Court for being feloniously on the premises of a European storekeeper. One of the witnesses, a native labourer in the latter's employ, said that he was carrying up bags of rice and flour from the landing-stage to the warehouse, and that the accused came and offered to help him. He declined the offer, saying :



“Don’t you know that my white man is stingy, and you would not get anything for your trouble !”

Long, long ago, before I went to Fiji, there was a white man in Levuka who was accused of meanness and as usual, according to custom, the natives lampooned him in a little *meke* or rhyme. As the subject of it died more than fifty years ago, I think I may give the opening verse without risking an action for libel.

“Oh ! stingy is Mr. Harman,  
His hat is an old teapot,  
His shirt a bêche-de-mer sack,  
His belt a piece of coir string.  
Oh ! stingy is Mr. Harman.”

The Resident Commissioner in the old cotton days lived on a plantation about twenty-five miles up the Rewa. The *lotu* or Christianity had penetrated about five miles further up stream. There the cannibal country commenced, with whose people Mr. Carew soon got in touch and acquired much influence over them. This was most useful in assisting to establish law and order, and averted a good deal of bloodshed. When King Thakombau, aided by European advisers, succeeded in establishing a settled form of Government, Mr. Carew became Secretary for the Province of Naitasiri, the boundaries of which marched with the country where dwelt the hill tribes of Eastern Viti Levu. Subsequently on the arrival of Sir Arthur Gordon, the first Governor, he became one of His Excellency’s chief advisers in native affairs, and was made Resident Commissioner of Tholo East, and during the troubles of the Little War he held a dormant commission as Deputy-Governor of Viti Levu.

Staying with him in those old devil days, I met Ro Seru, whom I have mentioned as so generously offering to give Mr. Carew one of his wives. He was a typical old cannibal with his big head of hair, scanty bit of twisty rag by way of dress, and blood-shot eyes. Excessive *yangona* or *kava* drinking had given him a scaly, leprous look, reminding me of what I had read of mangy man-eating tigers. He was notorious, even among his own people, as a voracious and greedy cannibal. On one of his visits he greatly pleased Carew by his stories of inland life, customs and folk-lore. The best way of rewarding a Fijian is by giving him a good feed, therefore, when his host dismissed him, he presented him with a tin of meat, saying :

“My friend, I am greatly pleased with all you have told me to-day. Here is a tin of meat such as we white men eat. All you have to do is to make it hot and eat it.

Ro Seru, with an old retainer, retired to a hut in the compound. Presently he burst into Carew's house in a wild state of excitement, his hairy chest plastered all over with bits of carrot and turnip and exclaimed :

"Oh ! Mr. Carew, my friend, I cannot say how much I respect you white gentlemen ! Nothing you have behaves in the ordinary manner ; your guns go off with a bang and so does your food."

Although he had been scalded by hot soup he was simply delighted with his new experience. What really happened was that the label had come off the tin, which contained soup. Also, it was not explained that it should have been opened before being heated. Old Seru had never seen such a thing before, and as he was told just to make it hot, he put it on a fire as he would have done with a yam. As the tin began to get black and hot he turned it about and scraped it with a mussel shell, as would also have been done in roasting a yam. The inevitable explosion followed and drenched Ro Seru and his henchman with the scalding contents. Then with a whoop and a yell he rushed off to offer his felicitations to the generous donor, and give a tribute to the magic and mystery of the wonderful white man.

I was fortunate, indeed, in serving my apprenticeship under so able an officer as Mr. Carew. Not only was he learned in all native lore, and a skilful scholar of the Fijian language, but also an excellent lawyer. The Stipendiary Magistrates, besides dealing with all summary jurisdiction cases, dealt with civil matters where the amount involved was under £50, for which purpose they were Commissioners of the Supreme Court. All cases heard by them were, of course, subject to revision upon appeal to the High Court. I am unable to recall any instance in which Mr. Carew's decisions were reversed by it.

Nandurulolo was a busy and important place, as the Court House for the Rewa District was there ; it was the residence of the Stipendiary Magistrate, and daily a large volume of business was transacted. As Mr. Carew was a member of the Executive Council he often had to go to Suva to attend it. Important matters in Tholo East occasionally called him there also, and during his frequent absences I had to take his place on the Lower Rewa. Thus I was pitchforked at once into the midst of affairs, and, perforce, had to study and work hard. I knew a smattering of Fijian, and under the patriarchal condition of affairs in the hill country could carry on all right, where I only had my simple *kai Tholo* to deal with. In the lowlands it was altogether different. There, daily disputes between Europeans, Indians and Fijians had to be tried, all of which were

complicated by the appearance in Court every now and then of lawyers from Suva. I knew nothing of the law, and I remember, each morning as I woke up I wondered how I should get through the day, but I had to carry on. It led me, however, to study. I entered my name on the list of candidates for admission to the Supreme Court, and after a while I was admitted to the Fijian Bar.

The junior magistrates were often unexpectedly called upon to take over the duties of their seniors. On one occasion the chief police magistrate at Suva was unable to take the bench. My colleague in the other hill province, Tholo West, happened to be in Suva at the time, and was called upon to fill the vacancy. He probably knew no more of law than I did. Unfortunately it was a day on which the magistrate was sitting as a Commissioner of the Supreme Court, adjudicating in civil matters, petty debts, breaches of contracts, etc. In one particular case a leading member of the Bar appeared for the defence, and after the evidence for the plaintiff was finished he moved that it did not establish the claim and that a non-suit should be entered. Then flashed through His Honour's perturbed brain, what the deuce was a *non-suit*? His brother, a junior officer of the Native Department, happened to be in the private office behind to which a doorway led, across which was only a curtain immediately behind the judicial chair. Hastily a note was scrawled and slipped through: "For heaven's sake go round to the C.J." (a mutual friend of the brothers) "and find out what a non-suit is." Looking as wise as he could, His Honour replied that as it was just lunch time he would adjourn the Court and give his decision on the point raised after the recess.

The Stipendiary Magistrates in those days used to call themselves "Maids of all work." Not only had we judicial duties, but we were Receivers of Wrecks, Coroners, Postmasters, our own District Engineers, and had also to be farmers, and grow the crops necessary to feed our police and the prisoners in the provincial gaols. Then we had to instil sanitary measures into the minds of the villagers, and teach them how to keep and milk cows. Incidentally, in connection with this latter task, we had to give instruction to the native women upon how to use feeding bottles, which happened to be the pet fad of one of our Governors. Our rulers were changed every few years, and upon the arrival of a new one I always used to wonder what his particular idiosyncrasy might be. Whatever it was, the district officers had to play up to it, as Fiji used to be a Crown Colony of a severe type, which meant His Excellency was a bit of an autocrat, and it was best for one to understand his bent, if possible. Incident-



ally, I would add, we were miserable failures over the feeding bottles. The women always declared they would never use them, and they didn't. Kipling says somewhere that in India the people always say that all the sahibs are mad, only some are madder than the others. That opinion is fully shared by the Fijians, and I do not wonder at it. Many scientific gentlemen were passed on to me to be gently conducted through the domains of the hill men. Some were botanists, others geologists, ethnologists, etc., etc. Whatever they were, the mountain folk spoke of them in reference to their particular hobby. The botanists they called *turang-a ni drau ni kau* or "gentlemen of the leaves of trees"; the geologists were *turang-a tuki vatu* or "gentlemen who hammered rocks," and so on. One of these scientists came up to me at Nandarivatu. At that cool and lovely spot there were no centipedes, but the gentleman was interested in them and said he would like to procure some. I told him that if he sent a shilling into the low country he would get what he wanted. That was a want of foresight on my part. A pickle bottle full was sent up to him. What he did not pickle himself he let go, and every now and then they reminded us of their presence. Fortunately, in Fiji their bites are not dangerous, but they are loathsome and disagreeable little pests.

The Resident Commissioner used to remark that Cicero had said that magistrates ought to be men of leisure. Speaking for myself, life was one continual state of toil and emergency, and having to find instant remedies for every conceivable kind of contingency, reminding me of the Hindu railway official in charge of a lonely jungle station who, finding a tiger on the premises one day, bolted himself into his office and telegraphed to headquarters :

"Tiger on platform ; please arrange."

There were always tigers about in my district, for which I had to arrange.

## CHAPTER V

### Wainimala

**T**HOLO EAST is the official name of the province to which I was appointed. It is better known to the people themselves as Wainimala, from the river so called, which with its affluents and tributaries spreads in a veritable network over that part of the interior. It joins the Wainimbuka, the main head of the Rewa, at the southern apex of Tholo East just below the village marked Matailombau on the map. Their junction forms the Wai Levu or Great River, called the Rewa by the early cartographers, from the native town of that name near its mouth. It joins the sea just opposite the islet of Nukulau, now the quarantine station for Suva, from which it is distant six miles. This islet, which lies at the head of Lauthala Bay, was in the early days the favourite anchorage for men-of-war, whalers and traders, and from it started the expedition despatched from H.M.S. *Challenger* to the Wainimala, which will presently be alluded to.

Allowing for their twists and bends, both the Wainimbuka and the Wainimala are accessible to light draught boats, the former for about seventy miles and the latter for about sixty from the sea. *Takia*, the canoes constructed for river work, can penetrate inland still further, and by them Viti Levu can be crossed almost entirely from north to south. A glance at the map will show this. Leaving Rukuruku at Viti Levu Bay, on the extreme northern coast, a bridle track of eight miles leads down to the village of Lau, on the right bank of the Wainimbuka. Embarking there on a *takia*, the stream can be followed down until it meets the Wainimala. From thence one can go by motor-boat right down to Suva.

Such being the facilities for transport, some of the early settlers started cotton plantations on the fertile alluvial bottoms of these streams, notwithstanding they were in the cannibal country. They bought their holdings from the native owners and managed to get on with them for a while. The position was always a bit strained through the rude and boisterous manners of the tribesmen, never-

theless the planters held on all right until about a year after the death of the Reverend Mr. Baker. Although the Wainimala people had had no hand in that crime it reacted on them, and they became insolent and threatening. The settlers, getting alarmed, sought the protection of the British Consul, Mr. (afterwards Sir John) Thurston, who after the annexation of the islands by Great Britain became one of our Governors. After consultation with them it was decided to abandon the plantations for a while at least. This was done, as will be shown, but it is but fair to mention that when peace was established after the advent of British rule, the natives admitted the validity of their sales of the lands to those who had settled among them, to whom, after due investigation by the new Government, Crown grants were issued.

As long as the planters remained in occupation, although subject to a great deal of annoyance, the danger was not perhaps altogether acute. However, it would become so when evacuation commenced, as the natives, seeing their erstwhile guests and, in a measure, their protégés leaving, would resent the fact and conceive that they then had the right to rush in and plunder. Such would be the trend of native thought. Sir John Thurston, aware of this, sought the assistance of the officer commanding-in-chief on the Australian station, who was then Commodore Lambert. He responded by coming down himself in his flagship, H.M.S. *Challenger*. He anchored at Nukulau at the mouth of the Rewa, and despatched an expedition of boats under his Flag-Commander Brownrigg.

To the scene of operations at Deoka, just below the junction of the Wainimbuka and the Wainimala, was a long, strong and a hard pull for some forty-five miles against the swift current, and meant camping a night on the way. I several times passed this spot in company with Sir John Thurston, who accompanied the *Challenger's* boats, and he gave me a graphic description of what happened on that disastrous day.

There the banks rise steeply from the river to a height of about forty feet, and are covered with thickets of bamboos, tall reeds and trees. The stream below is impeded by shallows and small rapids over which boats must be dragged. The tribesmen, who had plenty of old smooth-bore muskets, seeing the approach of an armed and what they conceived a hostile force, promptly opened fire, killing and wounding some of their opponents. They were answered by futile volleys and rocket discharges aimed over their heads. When Sir John Thurston suggested more effective means, Commander Brownrigg pulled his written orders out of his pocket. He was only to fire over

the natives' heads and on no account was there to be any bloodshed, and he said it would cost him his commission to disobey them. The shadow of an untoward fate was over him. Some years afterwards he was killed whilst boarding an Arab dhow, when he was the captain in command of H.M.S. *London*, the storeship at Zanzibar.

In face of all this the settlers were got together and taken down the river. One of them died subsequently from wounds, and was buried at Laulau, on the Middle Rewa. Sir John told me that they had great trouble with an Irish lady, the wife of one of the planters, who positively refused to leave until she had secured her favourite hen and the eggs she was sitting on. The noise of the firing frightened the bird and she took to her heels. Not so her mistress, whose sire had been one of the long service redoubtables in a celebrated Irish regiment. She inherited his bravery and courage, and serenely faced all the dangers and discomforts of the retirement in face of the enemy after having made sure of her precious fowl. Sir John Thurston had many anecdotes about her, and how on the score of the paternal services to the Empire and her own determination she demanded and usually got preferential treatment.

As the hillmen had suffered no casualties whatever, and had killed some of the foe, they claimed the victory, of course. It was no use thereafter threatening them with men-of-war. They laughed them to scorn, changing *manu-wa*, their mode of pronunciation of that word, into *manu-da*, a filthy term unfit for translation and print. Students of naval history will find an analogy in *The Autobiography of a Seaman*, in which Lord Dundonald, the author, describes the insult offered to the British ensign captured from the *Calcutta*, one of our old East Indiamen, which was hung under the quarter-gallery of one of the French ships in the Basque Roads.

These Wainimala people, however, did not interfere with the European settlers, but in 1872 they made a treacherous attack on a native Christian village on the border of the *lotu* country in the Naitasiri province, and killed and ate some of the inhabitants. These were feudatories of Thakombau, and their death caused His Majesty to take the field against the disturbers of his peace. By that time he had established a settled form of government with the aid of the leading Europeans of the group, foremost among whom was Mr. J. B. Thurston, who had been British Consul. This, in the opinion of the Upper Rewa tribes, definitely arrayed the whites against them, and in consequence they began to send threatening messages to the infant settlement at Suva, which they said they would plunder and burn when they had settled their score with Thakombau. I was

living there, and I remember we were rather concerned at the time, as the natives on the western shores of the harbour were closely related to the people in arms against the Government, and it was through them that we heard of their friends' intentions. They sat upon the rail for a while, but when fortune inclined to the royalists they too became ardently so.

As long as we were not taken by surprise we felt that we could easily hold our own. We had seen some tribal fighting and thought that we understood its system. When parties on the war trail met there was much interchange of abuse, boasting and challenges to mortal combat. Then should a man fall, the side to which he belonged promptly bolted. Victory always inclined to the side which made the first kill, as it was the custom, and indeed the correct thing, for the others to run. I have managed with great difficulty to piece together the histories of the principal hill tribes, and have succeeded in getting records of nearly three hundred years. Although they relate to a period of almost unbroken warfare, but little blood was actually shed. They harried and chased each other, frequently burning villages, which were speedily replaced by others. The land was but sparsely populated, and there was plenty of uninhabited country for the fugitives to take refuge in. The impression on my mind after some study of their legends and folklore stories is that life in the hills in the olden times was like a huge game of hide-and-seek. Communities would build villages, become prosperous and arrogant, and excite the jealousy of their neighbours, who would then enter into alliances with other clans and attack the common object of their envy. After desultory fighting, sacking and burning of villages, the weaker side would flee further back into the almost inaccessible part of the hills. Both sides by that time would be tired and fatigued with the fighting, and the defeated party would get time to recuperate and reorganise. Then they would probably retaliate on their foes and turn the tables.

It should not be inferred from this that the Fijians are cowards. We and they have different modes of thought—that is all. They will do many things that we should hesitate about. They think nothing of swimming across shark-infested waters, which a white man would consider suicide to attempt. The big navigable rivers were infested with small freshwater sharks, and I have known a good few incidents of men, women and children being killed by them, yet it never stopped their using the streams for highways. I have often heard the voice of song arising from the river below as I sat in my house on the high bank above and, looking down, have seen the



surface of the stream dotted with little black heads, a merry band of children swimming either to their games or to school. On one such an occasion a boy had the whole of a thigh torn away by a river shark. Fortunately, Dr. Corney, afterwards and for so many years Chief Medical Officer of Fiji, was on a visit at the time to the Messrs. Ansdell, the sons of the celebrated painter, who had a coffee plantation just at the junction of the Wainimala and Wainimbuka Rivers. The youth was carried there, and Dr. Corney tied up his arteries and stopped the bleeding. Mrs. Ansdell nursed the boy with great devotion for some six or seven weeks ; then he returned to his village at Nakorovatu, alongside of which I resided for eight years. Takanakia, who was thus restored to health, entered the Government service and was for many years the scribe or native clerk of his district. As he had lain ill for six weeks on the Ansdells' plantation, on his return home his parents went thither and demanded wages for their boy for that period.

It is really almost dangerous to save life, or do any great service to a native. It seems to give those so benefited an unanswerable claim on the person conferring the service. When I became the Resident Commissioner of Tholo North the people of Vatusila, the slayers of Mr. Baker, were within my jurisdiction. A small boy there fell into the rocky bed of the Singatoka and broke his leg. It appeared to me that his kinsmen did not want to have the trouble of looking after him, so I had him brought to Nandarivatu, and I asked the medical officer living at Mba, some thirty miles away, to come up and set his leg. He did so, and for a long time after the youth used to make a levy on me for his *sulus* or waist cloths and any other article that he fancied. It was the custom, and I was expected to fall in with it. I always looked upon it as a huge game, which I attempted to play according to the rules. On another occasion a man was ripped up by a wild boar whilst out hunting near Nandarivatu. His friends promptly brought him in and deposited him in our little infirmary, and I had to doctor him. My efforts were successful, and ever afterwards the old gentleman considered that I had to provide for him for the rest of his life. This is a very long digression, but I was tempted to it in order to try and throw a little light on some phases of the native mind. Barring these little peculiarities the Fijian is brave.

As drilled men in the armed forces of the country they made admirable soldiers and would follow their officers to the death. When I was in England at King Edward's coronation with a party of the Armed Native Constabulary I was one day accidentally jostled by

some men of the West Indian Regiment as we were detraining at Southampton, whither we had gone to see the ships of war assembled for the great review. My fellows saw the incident, and it was all I could do to stop them from forthwith pitching into the supposed delinquents. Sir John Thurston told me of a somewhat similar incident that occurred in New Zealand upon the occasion of the jubilee of the founding of Auckland. The Earl of Onslow, Governor of New Zealand, Earl Carrington, Governor of New South Wales, and our Governor of Fiji all foregathered there for the rejoicings that marked the day. Democracy is the order out there, and the Governors set off together without any guards or formalities. They just mingled with the crowd and got jostled a bit. Sir John Thurston, however, had his two orderlies with him, great big, burly six-foot men, privates in the Armed Native Constabulary, my old corps. They took good care to shoulder off any one who came too near Sir John. After the ceremony, when their Excellencies had returned to Government House, one of the other Governors began to chaff the orderlies and asked them why they had not also protected them. The reply was: "If you like to let the white men, your own people, hustle and treat you so, that is a matter between you and them, but they are not going to treat our man like that!"

Fijians are quite simple and frank in acknowledging the sentiment of fear. Unlike us, they are not ashamed of being thought frightened. One of them told me his adventures in the Solomon Islands, whither he had gone in a schooner trying to engage labour for the plantations. That was always a most hazardous enterprise and many got knocked on the head whilst at it or, worse still, wounded with poisoned arrows, which usually entailed a dreadful death from tetanus. To use his own words: "One day I went up a river, as one of the boat's crew, and I saw a large armed party concealed on one of the banks. I got very frightened and pointed it out to Dick, our white man in charge of the boat. He laughed, and said there was no danger. 'No danger,' I replied. 'Just look at me; I am trembling all over and very much in fear, and I never get that way unless I am in danger.'" I happened to be in Suva once when one of the rare cases of a Fijian being tried for murder was proceeding in the Supreme Court. The prisoner was found guilty of having killed the *Mbuli* of Moturiki, the head man of his district. When he was asked why sentence of death should not be passed upon him, he answered simply, "I am afraid to die."

Knowing as we did in Suva the native ideas of fighting, we felt just a bit anxious as to who would draw first blood in the struggle

between King Thakombau's forces and the *tevoro* or cannibals. We were armed and had, of course, taken steps to repel any attack. One lovely moonlight night the big war drums at Lami, the village at the head of the harbour, began to boom forth. We wondered what it portended, as we knew that the people there were kinsmen of those in arms against the Government. Presently we saw a flotilla of canoes coming across the bay, from which muskets were being discharged and from which we heard yells and war whoops. What did it mean? Had King Thakombau been defeated, and was the threatened attack on Suva about to take place? We mustered at the little wharf at the mouth of the small creek, the Numbukalou, which was then our landing-place. To get there we had to cross a primitive swing-bridge, and passing over it an excited gentleman immediately behind me slipped and fell. His rifle went off, the bullet flying between my legs. But we had no cause for alarm, as those on the canoes came to report a Government victory. The King's levies had encountered a party of the enemy, some of whom had fallen, and consequently the big heads had burnt their nearest villages and retired further into the interior. Therefore His Majesty had ordered that all the war drums in his dominions should be beaten and salutes fired, that all the world might know that fortune and the first blood was on his side, a portent of final victory.

A few days after I was on the Lower Rewa, of which district Ratu Napoleon was the Lieutenant-Governor, the chief who had so sternly set his face against hoarding and selfishness. He was busy then in mobilising his vassals in order to join King Thakombau, his liege lord. His Majesty, with the main body of his army, was at that time at Nathoka-ika, the village on the right bank of the river at the great bend of the Rewa just above Naitasiri, whilst his eldest son, Ratu Epeli, was with the advanced guard a little further up on the left bank, the troops under Napoleon's command forming the reserve. The latter's warriors mustered in full war-paint, armed with all sorts of weapons from the latest breech-loaders to flint-locks, clubs and spears. Very proud were the fortunate possessors of guns, and eager to excite admiration by frequently letting them off. Nothing pleases a Fijian more than a good loud bang, and many charges of powder and shot were usually expended ere the scene of action was reached. Fire discipline was an unknown quantity, and the question for native commanders, if they ever thought of such a thing, was how to arrive at the front with any ammunition at all. But the loud bangs and the cheers they elicited were very encouraging, and stimulated the spirits of the army. However, the supply of firearms was limited,



the greatest number of the rank and file being equipped with club and spear, the national weapons of old Fiji. The uniforms may be described as being chiefly "cleared for action," as, like our blue-jackets in the days of Nelson, the belligerents usually stripped for a fight. But what was lacking in clothing was made up in red, white and black paint, fantastic head-dresses, turbans and kilts of leaves and grasses. There were no roads in those days, and the march was in single rank on the narrow tracks bordering the Rewa River, the great highway to the interior. The long, spread-out columns in Indian file, bedizened and decked out in all the pomp and circumstance of glorious war, with fluttering pennons and banners of native cloth, formed quite a magnificent and imposing spectacle. The broad waters of the river were covered by an immense flotilla of *takia* or river canoes, propelled by the lusty arms of boys and women, the Army Service Corps. In war it was always the duty of the women, assisted by the stoutest of the boys, to feed the warriors, and usually they performed the duty most efficiently. I remember with what admiration I regarded those willing toilers who followed their husbands, sons and lovers to the field. They took a pride in supplying them with all the delicacies of the sea coast—fish, cockles, native lobsters, coco-nut and taro puddings, etc., and willingly and cheerfully, with many a laugh and joke, did they endure the hardships of campaigning.

Afterwards, when King Thakombau had brought his operations to a successful issue, I saw the feudal levies returning with the spoils of war, which consisted principally of great stacks of yams and taro, the produce of the gardens of the vanquished hill people. The ascent of the river is toilsome and arduous, only to be accomplished by the lightest of craft, but owing to the strength of the current the return is easy. The usual method for bringing the inland produce to the coast is by means of rafts made of bamboos, which abound in the interior, lining the river banks. They are easy to get and cheap, and when they have reached their destination can be abandoned. It was on these craft that the loot from the hills was carried, part of which consisted of the great big wooden *lali* or war drums, several of which are to be found in each village. They give forth, when beaten, a hollow booming noise, rather musical when heard in the distance. By means of them telegraphic communication can be kept up between the hamlets and strongholds of tribal communities, and like our drums they have their various rolls and calls. As I encountered the victors returning home they were sounding "the highest points of war." Everything that could be seized had been taken. Mr. Carew, who

always had a soft place in his heart for the inland people, indignantly said to Ratu Napoleon, who with his rear-guard had managed to get up in time for the sacking of the villages, "What a lot of robbers you are! You have carried off everything except the fragments of the earthenware cooking pots, which you have smashed into smithereens."

"Oh!" laughingly replied that redoubtable warrior, "we'd have brought them away, too, if they had been of any use."

Before His Majesty's successful campaign closed much fighting, *vakaviti*, or according to the manner of Fiji, occurred. After his troops had scored first blood by slaying one of the enemy in the initial skirmish, the latter retired into a fortified village called Nangali, on the Wai-indina, close to its junction with the Rewa, near Viria, which latter was always an important place, and in those days a cannibal stronghold. These places were besieged in the usual casual native style, until the garrisons got tired of defending them. Then, in the small hours, when the river fog hung heavy around, and their assailants were steeped in that sweet and heavy sleep when, as the native proverb puts it, "The pillow slips from beneath the slumberer's head," they silently stole away, the last to leave firing the houses so that they would afford no shelter to the foe. Then the besiegers, awakened by the roar and crackling of the conflagration, would find that their opponents had safely escaped. Never mind! it was another glorious victory to be proclaimed once more to His Majesty's lieges by the village drums throughout his dominions.

The enemy made their next stand at a stronghold called Nasorovakawalu, which means "eight times atoned for," from the number of its previous sieges. His Majesty sat down before it for a very long time, and we civilians and non-combatants thought he would never take the place. He had with him a half-company of the regular infantry which, under its white officers, was surely and steadily subjugating the cannibals in the western hills. But he refused to allow his trained men to carry Nasorovakawalu by assault. They were eager to do so, and without doubt they would have been successful, but they were studiously kept in the background. Thakombau meant to conduct the operations in his own way, and would brook no interference. All the glory was to be his. He used to watch the European officers drilling their men, and said it was a very pretty sight, so much so that he thought he would send them down to his own royal city at Mbau to amuse the women.

Once more the advantage of sea power was demonstrated. The hillmen were cut off from the coast, they could not replenish their



#### TINGA THROWERS.

The annual game played at the sprouting of the yams. The reeds used then have hard wood heads, called *ulutoa*, a relic of ancient phallic worship.



#### LALI OR WOODEN DRUMS.

Formerly used as calls to war, cannibal feasts and to signal movements of the enemy, etc.  
Now, like our own bells, they summon people to Church.



stock of ammunition, and it began to give out. As long as they had a charge of powder they held on using broken bottles for projectiles. Then they effected the usual bolt and retired further inland. But as their munitions were failing, and they could not be heartened up by the cheering bangs of well-charged guns, they thought it time to give in. Heralds were sent in with strings of whales' teeth to *soro* or beg His Majesty's pardon and sue humbly for peace.

Thakombau thought enough had been done for honour and glory, and he and all his people were heartily tired of fighting. So he accepted the overtures and a peace was patched up. So was ended what had been quite a pleasant military promenade for the young gentlemen of the feudal forces. Suva, where I was living at the time, was one of His Majesty's most loyal fiefs, and duly sent its quota of warriors to the royal army. Some of them when they came down on leave used to call in to tell me their adventures. One day I saw a strange-looking article slung round the neck of one of them. On asking what it was I was told with a jaunty air: "Oh! just a hill fish, sir." On examination it proved to be the smoke-dried head and gills of one. The reply was made with much pride as much as to say, "Am I not brave to have brought such a trophy from the dreaded cannibal country?"

One effect of the campaign was that many powerful tribes who were wavering between Christianity and the old way boldly came over to the *lotu*, and "put on the cloth." Of such were the people of Matailombau, Soloiria and Naileng-a, but certain irreconcilables, the Nandaravakawalu, Muaira, Noemalu and Nangarawai clans, dwellers in the fastnesses of the very centre of Viti Levu, still remained heathens and cannibals. They formed a small confederation under the name of Lomai Tholo, i.e. the central highlands. They, with the three previously mentioned, constituted the province of Tholo East or Wainimala, when, after Queen Victoria's assumption of sovereignty, the country became a British colony.

Before long fighting broke out between the newly converted people of Matailombau and the still *tevoro* dwellers in Lomai Tholo, in which the Christian party was worsted. They sued for peace, which was granted on terms including the payment of an indemnity. That was some time in 1873, and when I took up my appointment in Tholo East eleven years after, in 1884, the last instalment of the debt was being paid. In 1874 the Union Jack was hoisted, and Fiji came under our rule. The *lotu* or Christianity in the meantime slowly but surely crept still further into the hill country. A small but ancient clan, Mboubutho by name, living in the valleys of the



Nasongo and Wailoa Rivers, both of which rise in Mount Victoria, which after uniting discharge themselves into the Wainimala at Undu, put on "the cloth." Thereupon their nearest cannibal neighbours in Muaira began to annoy and ill-treat them, among other things violating the cave which formed the mausoleum of the head family of the newly converted tribe. Fijians are adepts at the art of petty annoyance. I remember hearing of one tribe about to join the *lotu* being much exasperated by the sneers of their heathen neighbours, who sent over to inquire if they had a plentiful supply of small mirrors or trade looking-glasses. Being asked the reason of their question the reply was: "Oh! we thought you would like to practise before a glass how to put on a sanctimonious look, like a Wesleyan native minister."

The Mboumbutho people appealed to the newly formed Government for protection. It was time to close all disturbances inland. The duly trained infantry force had, for the time being at any rate, effected the subjugation of the western tribes. A company of it was therefore detailed for operations in Lomai Tholo, or the central highlands. Under the new era it was embarked partly on H.M.S. *Renard*, one of the war schooners employed for police duty in the Western Pacific, and in some local craft. This force was under the command of Major James Harding, who had distinguished himself, and been severely wounded in the western campaign. Levuka was then the capital of the group, and the expedition sailing from thence disembarked at Viti Levu Bay on the northern coast of the mainland.

It marched through the Nalawa country in the Wainimbuka valley, and mounting the dividing range descended into the watershed of the Wainimala, which was to be the scene of its operations. The people of the Lomai Tholo confederation put up a very fair fight, but the trained troops of the Government swept everything before them. It was a piece of warfare altogether different from that waged by King Thakombau a couple of years previously. Some of the enemy were closely related to Ro Seru, Mr. Carew's friend, of whom mention has been made. He belonged to a branch of the great Solo-i-ra tribe, which for some time had ranged itself definitely on the Government side. His relatives made known to him their desire to submit and he, I believe, at once went to Mr. Carew and asked him to intervene. That gentleman accordingly made his way inland with a large quantity of European cloth, the acceptance of which would mean the renunciation of cannibalism, and adhesion to the new state of affairs. He was met by the leading chiefs of the



little inland confederation who at once donned the *sulu* or waistcloth of the *lotu*, and this was the final close of hostilities in the eastern highlands. When two years afterwards their kinsmen in the west revolted and caused the "Little War" they remained firm in their new allegiance, and took the field in support of it.

Mr. Carew has often told me of his first entrance into Narokorokoyawa, the chief village of Noemalu, the leading clan of Lomai Tholo. Ro Vuthang-o its *Vuninalu* or great fighting chief, a most redoubtable warrior, to the clang of whose arms the whole interior had for many years resounded, met him at the outskirts, and taking his hand led him to the principal house. He was more than seventy years of age and died the next year. He was quite toothless, and explained it by saying that it was caused through eating some of his near relations. When that is done one always loses one's teeth. He said that he had found a young relative in his women's quarters, and native law and custom demanded his death and consumption at the hands of the aggrieved party. Only in such a way could the matter be dealt with honourably. Vuthang-o's death, which occurred in the early part of 1875, was caused by measles, a scourage hitherto unknown in Fiji. It swept away about a third of the population, and was the prime reason for the outbreak in the west, and the cause of Sir Arthur Gordon's "Little War." There the people ascribed the new mysterious malady to the wrath of the ancestral gods. This belief was, of course, fanned by the old hereditary caste of priests who had lost the influence and emoluments of their office through the new dispensation. Against this they preached, and predicted the utter destruction of the people unless they returned to the old way, and once more propitiated the spirits of their forebears by human sacrifices and cannibal rites. Thus adjured the western hill tribes "threw off the cloth," attacked their Christian neighbours, and offered the spiritual essence of the slain to the old gods, whilst they consumed the material parts. That is the danger of heathenism in Fiji; it cannot be maintained properly without human sacrifices. Throughout my twenty-six years' residence among the hill tribes the old spirit lurked beneath the surface. Many prophecies were made by those who secretly adhered to the ancient faith. The failure of these predictions was always attributed to the want of the one thing essential—the human offerings. I always feared that this excuse would lead to the murder of some old woman or other helpless beings, because as long as the sacrifice was human the gods were indifferent as to whether they were but infants, females or old people. An old chief once told me it was blood that was required.

Measles in my time marked a distinct epoch in native life. I used to hear the people talk of "just about the time" of them, or so many "years before or after." Now I believe the new generations educated in the Government and Mission schools give you dates and years instead. Besides, the measles have since then occasionally made their appearance, but being met by the medical service of the Colony have not had the dire effects of the first epidemic. Nevertheless, whenever they were prevalent they used to cause the greatest anxiety to the district officers from the happy-go-lucky habits of the people, who were as a rule too easy-going to take proper care of themselves.

Unfortunately their first introduction is closely connected with the assumption of British rule. Sir Hercules Robinson, afterwards Lord Rosmead, was Governor of New South Wales at the time. He negotiated the Deed of Cession, placing Fiji under the sovereignty of Queen Victoria. After it had been signed by the leading chiefs he invited King Thakombau to visit him in Sydney, and for that purpose H.M.S. *Dido* was assigned for his conveyance thither. He went accompanied by a large native suite. After a stay of some little time His Majesty returned in the same ship-of-war, which landed him at Levuka. One of his attendants immediately developed measles which spread like fire throughout the group, destroying alike the dwellers in the remotest hills of Viti Levu and the people of the furthest isles and islets.

Ro Vuthang-o, the old Wainimala chief, left three sons, all middle-aged. The second of them succeeded his father as *Vunivalu* of Noemalu, according to the old title. Under the new government he was styled the *Mbuli* or head man of Noemalu. His two brothers, both very capable men, also held appointments in the service. I found them in office when I took up my residence in Tholo East in 1884.

The foregoing is a fragment of the doings in the hills between the death of Mr. Baker in 1867 and the year just mentioned.

## CHAPTER VI

### Ancient Traditions

THE last chapter was an endeavour to portray something of the comparatively modern history of the inland tribes. To understand them still more a short summary of their ancient legends and traditions should be given, as their effect upon the daily life of the people crops up at every turn. A brief epitome now will save explanations of them as they occur in this narrative.

The Viti Levu highlanders still maintained the simplicity of their patriarchal system in 1884, when I first made their acquaintance, despite the advent of Christianity and a new form of government. Their old religion was that of ancestral worship, and the relations of the members of a clan to each other was that of father, son and brother. The first known progenitor was styled the *Kalou vu* or originating spirit, and was worshipped as the tutelary genius of his people. At his death he passed into the realms of the gods and watched over and protected his descendants, whilst his spirit entered his successor who became his shrine in this world, his reincarnation. The appearance in public of the chief of a clan was greeted by a shout of divine acclamation called the *tama*. The simple meaning of that word is "father," and therein lies the kernel of the whole system, that of family relationship. In the first years of my sojourn with these people, although nominally Christians, the old religion was very near the surface. In times of sickness, drought or the contrary, sacrifices and offerings were made surreptitiously to the family heads as propitiations to the ancestral spirits. Men who were unfortunate enough to be childless were most unhappy. They feared to die and face the forebears of their race, who would be enraged with the wretch who had failed to supply posterity for the continuance of the family worship. Barrenness of wives was a frequent source of application to the courts for divorce, and British law was considered harsh and inapplicable in that it took no cognizance of such a grievance.

One of my early experiences was an example of this general family relationship. The Native Stipendiary Magistrate for the Lomai Tholo district, to the clans of which he was more or less related, and I met at Undu, a Muaira village on the junction of the Wailoa and Wainimala Rivers. Before we could sit together in the Provincial Court he had to clear up all minor offences in his District Court, in which he had jurisdiction up to fines of thirty shillings, or terms of imprisonment not exceeding three months. It was not etiquette for me to be seen whilst he was adjudicating, but there was only one big house in the place. It was, however, screened off at the upper end by a large bark-cloth curtain in order to form a space for a sleeping apartment, and into this I retired whilst my colleague carried on. He sat in the centre of the house just below the curtain, whilst the tribal elders and native officials ranged themselves in a semicircle round him on the matted floor. Opposite him at the door at the lower end was a constable, the only one allowed to stand in that assembly, who did so in virtue of being the representative of the mighty *Matanitu*, i.e. the government.

At the magistrate's side was the native clerk of the court. He read a name from a list which was repeated by the policeman at the door, and which was again reiterated by some village constables outside. In response a man dived through the low door and crawled up the mats until he reached the Presence. Then the clerk read out the charge, and the culprit was thus addressed by the occupant of the bench: "Oh! younger brother, what is this I hear, that you have transgressed and broken the law of the land?" The accused respectfully clapped his hands, the native way of showing reverence, and replied: "Noble Elder Brother, that which is preferred against me is true. In my folly and perverseness I did that which I ought not to have done, and committed sin." Then his elder rejoined: "Oh! little brother, for this you must go to gaol and labour for three months!!!" Once more the accused respectfully acclaimed the authority of the court by clapping his hands, and was taken off in custody by the representative of the great *Matanitu* standing at the door.

*Matanitu* is the key-word to the whole system of ancestral religion. *Mata* means in front or in face of, whilst *nitu* is the pure Fijian for god. A group of clans descended from the same *kalou vu* or originating spirit, worship a common god and bow down before his face, and hence are welded together in a form of government. Tribes, with many off-shoots in the shape of subsidiary clans, but all descended from the one ancestor are *matanitu*. When King

Thakombau was asked by his European ministers, after they had succeeded in forming a system of government for him, what it should be called, at once said *Matanitu*. Figuratively speaking the Europeans and the different tribes, by uniting together in the furtherance of a common object, became votaries of the same spirit. His Majesty, like all true Fijian chiefs, excelled in all he undertook, and was a scholar and a past master in the niceties of his own language, so without hesitation the word suggested by him was adopted, and in all Government proclamations and enactments in the vernacular *matanitu* is employed whenever reference is made to the supreme power.

Under the old patriarchal system, as it existed among the hill tribes, all men were free and equal, and tyranny and oppression not to be borne with. But there was an iron discipline where the welfare of the clan was concerned; members were expected to die for it and sacrifice themselves, when necessary, for the divine head, the chieftain.

A settler once accused a hill chief of having tried to poison him. He scorned the charge. "Why," said he, "should I risk the danger of such an act? I had only to tell one of my young men that I desired this person's death and he would have murdered him and taken the consequences, without implicating me at all!" The old-time gentleman who has been mentioned in the first chapter as having asked that he might be paid his salary in whales'-teeth instead of in coin of the realm, had a daughter who was committed for trial to the Supreme Court on a charge of having murdered her husband. Her father, unacquainted with the intricacies and chances of British law, made up his mind that she was bound to be convicted. He called a family council, and it was decided to send to Suva at once one of the meaner members of the clan to suffer the last penalty in her stead, and to save the chief family from such an indignity. It was simply a matter of arrangement, and the man selected was quite content to suffer vicariously for the honour of the clan. The lady was young and pretty, an island girl with a strong dash of Polynesian blood which makes for fairness of skin and wavy instead of woolly hair. Added to these charms she was ably defended; neither the judge nor the European assessors were desirous to convict, and she was acquitted. This latter instance did not happen in the hill country, but in one of the islands. Although the maritime people have departed from the ancient simplicity of primitive native life, the bedrock principles are still to be found below the surface.

The hillmen have carefully preserved their genealogies, being able



to trace their ancestors back to the ninth and tenth generations. They have also a clear memory of many of their ancient traditions, and from these two sources a very fair amount of history is procurable.

Although many of the customs of the different tribes vary somewhat, nearly all can be traced down to a common origin. Their diversities and the dissimilarities in dialects seem to be of comparatively recent growth, owing to the wars which devastated the country. The present-day native will tell you that until the advent of Christianity and a settled form of government, no man dare step outside his own tribal boundaries. According to him, it was the fashion upon meeting a stranger to say, "Hullo! here is somebody whose talk is different from ours; let's club and eat him." But in telling you that, he is speaking on the spur of the moment without reflection. If one proceeds to cross-examine him, it will be discovered that there was quite an elaborate polity for the regulation of inter-tribal intercourse, a system providing ambassadors, heralds and messengers, whose lives during the conduct of negotiations and diplomatic dealings were sacred. A powerful tribe on the Wainimala with whom I had a great deal to do, only shortly before I made its acquaintance, considered themselves strong enough to defy public opinion and, like Germany, able to disregard international or, in this particular case, inter-tribal law. They treacherously murdered heralds taking to them the sacred *tambua*, the consecrated symbols of the ambassadorial office. The people who did this were the *kai* Navitilevu (*kai* means of or belonging to). They were so powerful that in their chief village were nine *Mbure* or tribal halls, which meant that the tribe contained nine distinct clans or sub-divisions. Presuming on this strength, they disregarded the amenities, and slew those whose office should have rendered their lives sacred. Consequently all the neighbouring tribes formed a confederation against them, and almost utterly smashed them up. One of the first of my tasks was to gather this broken clan together and settle them again on their ancestral lands.

In bygone days there was a very considerable intercourse between the various communities. Even the remotest dwellers in the very heart of the inaccessible Viti Levu hills have songs which tell of the islands and chief places in the group, and of far away Tonga. In Nandrong-a, the south-west point of Viti Levu, where the Singatoka River finds the sea, they have this legend, which was related to me nearly fifty years ago, when I first went to Fiji. It says that in olden times Viti Levu was densely populated, fighting was unknown and a



profound peace prevailed. Then strangers arrived and taught Fijians the art of war unaccompanied at first by cannibalism. One day, however, in burning a village some of the bodies of the slain got scorched, and their smell offended the nostrils of the principal chief. He ordered some of his retainers to move the source of his annoyance, and in doing so one of them burnt his finger, which he naturally licked. The taste seemed good, and he was led secretly to try a bit of the corpse. He liked it and communicated his discovery to his friends, and from it originated cannibalism.

The legend is curious for two reasons : first, for its resemblance to Lamb's Essay on the Origin of Roast Pork, and, secondly, in that it retaliates upon the account given by Mariner of the introduction of war and cannibalism to Tonga. His book, *Mariner's Tonga Islands*, is the classic of those parts, the author being resident there from 1806 to 1812. He says : "When Captain Cook visited these islands (1771-77) cannibalism was scarcely thought of amongst them ; but the Fiji people soon taught them this, as well as the art of war."

The first known ancestor or originating spirit of the Nandrong-a tribe was a Tongan, adopted by it in about A.D. 1600. Captain Cook's first visit to Tonga was in 1771, one hundred and seventy years later. The whole valley of the Singatoka River, part of which flows through the district of Nandrong-a, is impregnated with Tongan blood, and the people there talk a dialect of that country. Their history for some three hundred years shows their connection with it, and in all probability it would seem that the adventurers who taught the Fijians the art of war came from thence. In the next chapter, dealing with the history and genealogies of the principal inland tribes, I hope to make this quite clear. There is very good ground for asserting that at least one hundred and seventy years before Cook visited Tonga, or over two hundred before Mariner knew it, the people of that country were carrying fire and club into the hitherto peaceful land of Fiji.

Most of the important clans of the interior boast of a foreign ancestor as their originating spirit, and from his advent comes the first dawn of authentic history. Many of the tribes, however, are pure-blooded Melanesians without any intermingling of foreign blood. Their tribal chronicles do not seem to be so well kept as those of the people who adopted strangers, but their legends mention the arrival of the latter, recording the occurrence as "The coming of the gods." Their traditions, gathered from an entirely different source, form a valuable corroboration of the account given by those

who adopted the wandering demi-gods, Polynesian Vikings, who some three to four centuries ago ranged the South Seas in their picturesque mat-sailed double canoes.

One of the most primitive of the Melanesian tribes is that of Mboumbutho, with its affiliated clan of Nasongo. They live just below the eastern slopes of Mount Victoria in the valleys of the Nasongo and Wailoa Rivers. One of the elders of the Nasongo, Nandavelevu (The Great Flood), gave me their version of the origin of cannibalism. It is over thirty years ago since he told me the tale, but I wrote it down at the time, and this is what he said :

"I am entitled to speak of olden times. I am an old man and the son of a very old man, who told me much of former times. When we first heard of the *Lotu* (the Christian religion) my father said to me, 'My son, this is no new thing, we had it in bygone ages. There is a legend of our tribe which says that at one time profound peace prevailed in the land; we were religious and did not go to war. Then a great catastrophe befell Viti: all the crops perished, and the people tried to exist upon leaves and the bark of trees. During this period two miserable, starving men met in the woods. One of them said, "My friend, what are you about?" The other answered, "Looking for food. I am nearly dead with hunger." Then the first replied, "So am I, my friend; there is nothing for us—kill and eat me." The other refused, but when a favourable opportunity presented itself he clubbed and killed the first speaker, that being his intention from the beginning. Then he discovered that human flesh was quite good eating, and went home and told his friends, who, pressed by hunger, tried the experiment for themselves and, approving, made it a general habit. At first they did it surreptitiously, killing only the women and children of neighbouring communities. This led to reprisals and to the necessity of living in fortified villages, and thus began war and cannibalism.'"

Old Nandavelevu, who told me this, was a typical inland Melanesian hillman, sooty black, with woolly hair and of short stature. He it was who owned to having strangled his own mother, when *Mbuli* Nandrau was giving us the little disquisition on the uses of the *Solanum Anthropophagorum*. Poor old chap! he always had something mysterious the matter with him. One day, when I was riding along the eastern slopes of Mount Victoria as they sweep down to the Nasongo valley, I came upon him and a group of fellow-villagers squatted upon the edge of the track. I thought that he looked rather sick, and, accosting him, said, "Nandavelevu, you look a bit ill. What is the matter?" "Matter," replied he, "why, what is always the

matter with us Fijians?" "Well," I answered, "what is it?" "Witchcraft, of course. I am under a spell." "But why, Nandavelevu, should anyone bewitch you?" The response to this was furnished by a sprightly youth standing by: "Don't you know, sir, that he and all his people before him were murderers, and the relatives of his victims are trying to pay him out by incantations against him?"

The people of Mba, who live on the extreme north-west coast of Viti Levu, say too that formerly they were not cannibals. A frightful hurricane that ravaged their district created a famine which made them devour each other, and eating human flesh became an institution. So great was the havoc in the Yasawa Islands, just to the north and westward of them, that their inhabitants had to come over to the mainland in search of sustenance. Thus from three independent sources tradition asserts that formerly cannibalism did not exist, but was brought about by untoward circumstances.

Whilst the inland communities retained the republican simplicity of their early institutions, the coast people became absorbed in a series of petty kingdoms and principalities. When Fiji first began to be known in the commencement of the nineteenth century, there were as many kings and kinglets as one reads of in the Book of Joshua, and, if possible, they were more bloodthirsty and crueller than their prototypes of sacred writ. They established domestic slavery, and when the fortune of war provided nothing for their larders they fell back upon their domestic preserves, and ate their own wretched serfs. My account of turtle fishing given in the *Field* shows how a chief could dispose of his bondsmen, the offspring of those conquered in war. It says: "The ordinary levy of the Ratu was ten turtles for each canoe. When nine apiece had been procured, the *Tunindau*, or Chief Fisherman, appointed a day on which the fishery was to close, and any canoe short of its tale had to have one of the crew killed to make it up."

These petty despots practised the most appalling cruelty. When they erected their large tribal halls or temples they considered it necessary to place a human being in each of the holes dug for the heavy posts which were to sustain the framework of the building. As generally they were large structures entailing the use of thirty or forty posts, the toll of human lives on such an occasion was considerable. The first launch of a big double war canoe, many of which carried three hundred warriors, was the cause of much bloodshed. The rollers on the slipway were human beings lashed to banana trunks to prevent struggling. In a book written in the old cannibal days,

*The Cruise of the Havannah*, by Captain Erskine, R.N., is an account of such a gruesome launch furnished by a European eye-witness.

Such practices were quite unknown in the hill country. I heard of only one solitary instance of men being placed underneath house posts, and that was merely on a small scale, and the individual prowess of one warrior. From it he received the name of Nandurutamata, which means "the man post." He determined to build a small sleeping house for himself which would only entail the use of four posts. Whenever he got an opportunity he stalked a foe, clubbed him and brought him home until he had collected his tale. It was the work of many months, and was considered quite an extraordinary feat. A coast king would have sent his army out and bagged the lot at one go, but in the hills Nandurutamata had to do it off his own bat. When I went up to Tholo, the Resident Commissioner, Mr. Carew, warned me against the old man as an old die-hard and reactionary, but, as the Fijians used to say, he had become quite "tame," and as his nephew was the sergeant of my small police force, he quite looked upon himself as one of my retainers, and from him I obtained many ancient legends and old-time lore.

## CHAPTER VII

### Polynesian Adventurers

"East is East and West is West,  
And never the twain shall meet."—KIPLING.

WITH the greatest respect to the poet, it seems as if East and West do meet in the Fiji Islands in more ways than one. According to the Charter constituting them the Colony of Fiji, they lie between the fifteenth and twenty-second degrees of south latitude, and between the one hundred and seventy-seventh degree of west longitude, and the one hundred and seventy-fifth degree of east longitude from the meridian of Greenwich. Consequently the one hundred and eightieth degree passes through the group dividing it in two, in one of which eastern time would prevail and western in the other, were it not for the local enactment known as "The Uniform Date Ordinance." Except for that the eastern side would be a day ahead of the western, and so the time of the former is made the standard of the whole group.

Fiji is therefore nearly the antipodes of England, it being impossible to get away further either East or West. The clocks are twelve hours ahead of Greenwich time, and our flag out there, upon which, according to our proud boast, the sun never sets, is the first in the British Dominions to welcome its rays.

Not only do the extremes of longitude meet there, but the Polynesians and the Melanesians, the two great characteristic races of the Southern Pacific, have there come into contact and intermingled. Tonga and Fiji are their outposts, the people in the former being the most western of the light-coloured Polynesians, whilst in the latter are to be found the most eastern of the woolly-headed Melanesians. Both sides show the effect of proximity and the continual intercourse of some centuries. The hair of the Tongans is not so straight and fine as that of the Tahitians and Samoans, whilst that of the Fijians of the eastern and southern islands of the group is less woolly and coarse, nor are they so dark in colour as the almost purely



Melanesian tribes of Viti Levu. The contrast is very marked, to the advantage of the island people, whose breed has been much improved by their contact with the beautiful Polynesians.

This fusion of the races is due to the south-east trade wind which from April to November blows steady, constant and true. An examination of the chart of the Southern Pacific will show how favourable this is for craft from Tahiti, Samoa and Tonga, and other islands to the eastward. For hundreds of years it has brought adventurers from those places, though mostly from Tonga, and they have put their mark undoubtedly on the outlying portions of the Fijian group. Captain Cook, whilst at Tonga in 1777, noted that the young bloods there went to Fiji to acquire military fame and do a campaign or two, as our young noblemen used to do on the Continent in the times of Marlborough and the Georges. How few know that charming book *Mariner's Tonga*, which treats of the author's captivity there in the early days of the last century! He recounts many of the adventures of his Tongan friends, especially of the chief he calls Cow Moala, who, passing the eastward islands of Fiji, generally their farthest goal, pushed on to Viti Levu.

Nearly two hundred years before Captain Cook observed Fijians in Tonga, Polynesian adventurers had made their way to Viti Levu. From their comeliness and beauty they were regarded as gods and heroes by the simple black people of that country, who received them hospitably, gave them wives and made them their chiefs. As I have already told you, with their arrival the period of authentic history commences, and their doings and those of their descendants can be duly given by the native chroniclers. It would seem that these new arrivals came principally from Tonga, but there is reason also to believe that some may have come from Samoa.

I mentioned in the last chapter that the *kalou vu* or originating spirit of the Nandrong-a tribe was a Tongan. Nandrong-a is in the extreme south-west corner of Viti Levu. The inhabitants were down on the coast fishing one day, and for that purpose visited the little islet of Kamba. Strange sounds proceeding from the top of a lofty coco-nut palm astonished them, and, looking up, they saw what they called a red-skinned youth, very beautiful to behold, trying to hide himself in the fronds which crowned the tree, and evidently chattering with fear. They made signs for him to come down, and when he did so they fed him, took him home and gave him one of their girls for his wife. He was said to have talked gutturally or hoarsely, as the Fijians say the Tongans do. The Fijian for hoarseness is *ndrong-androng-a*. They endeavoured to imitate him and learnt to speak



as he did, and called themselves the *kai* Nandrong-a or people of Nandrong-a. The peculiarity of their dialect and the Tongan language is that wherever the letter "s" occurs in Fiji and other South Sea Islands the letter "h" is used instead, and "s" for "t," and "k" for the hard "ng." In reading Captain Cook's book, when he recounts his stay in Tonga, it will be observed that his hosts talked to him of Hamoa, which, however, the inhabitants of that country and the ordinary Fijians call Samoa. Mariner in his narrative does the same. The peculiarity of the Nandrongan dialect is most marked. Whilst I was at Nandarivatu the constabulary there was reinforced by a small draft of men from that district. The first time they attended our usual Sunday morning service when we came to the Lord's Prayer I noticed that all the men except them kept quiet with a broad grin on their faces. The orthodox rendering of saying "Give us this day" in ordinary Fijian is "*Solia e na sing-a ongo.*" The Nandrongan rendering is "*Holia e na Hing-a oke.*" After church I asked the native officer why the men had not repeated the prayer as usual. "Oh! they just wanted to listen to those Nandrong-a boys." I suppose one might liken it to men up from Zummerzet affording amusement by praying in the dialect they are popularly supposed to use.

By the year 1895 I had collected the genealogies of most of the leading hill tribes of Viti Levu. In almost every one of them the then occupant of the chieftaincy was the ninth in descent from the first known ancestor, who in every case was a light-coloured stranger. The different tribes knew the names of these men, where they landed and the route they followed in making their way inland. The accompanying map shows the various spots on the coast where they disembarked and how they arrived at their final destinations. The greater number of the heroes who became the *kalou vu* or originating spirits of the Singatoka River clans, landed at Tuva in the Nandrong-a province. A glance at the map will show this place at the extreme south-west point of Viti Levu. From Tonga thence, the south-east trade is a dead fair wind, and there is a fine commodious harbour at the mouth of the Tuva River, sheltered by the islands of Likuri and Matamatathawa. It is such a commodious port that, whilst I was in the islands, the large fruit steamers from Australia and New Zealand used to go there to load bananas grown in the spacious valley of the Singatoka River. The mouth of the Tuva affords the most commodious anchorage in the south-west of the island.

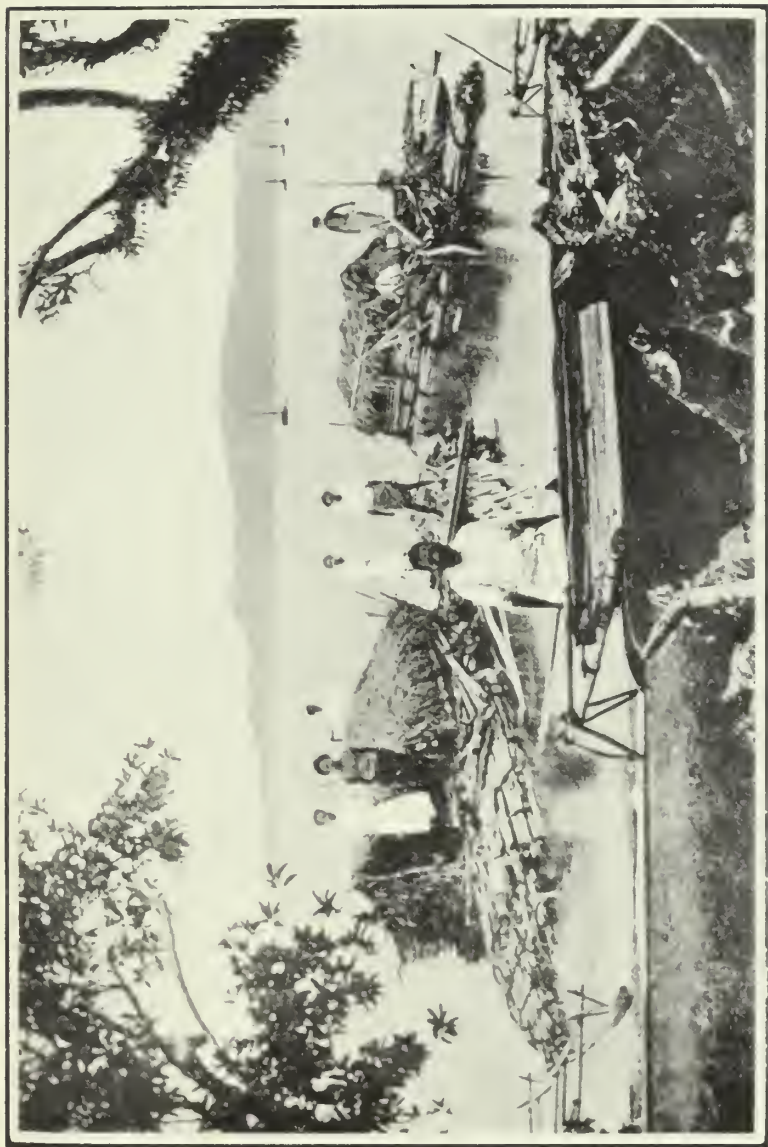
The new arrivals made their way thence to Mavua on the Singatoka River, and then spread themselves out in various directions.

From that time forward there is a plain and succinct account of what they did. The only strange thing about them is that in one instance only is any name of the place from whence they came given. Those who settled at Mavua called that place so, saying that that was the ancestral designation of the tribe to which they belonged. The old Fijian name for this spot is Nakumbululevu, and the descendants of the original owners still dwell there, and their title to the land is officially recognised. One of these adventurers, the demi-god who founded the Mataku tribe, erected a row of thirteen stones, each of which he called after a moon, thus providing a record for a lunar year. The place where he lined them out he called the *Tuithake* or the "uprising," otherwise the East. Another placed a large stone in the centre of his village at which malefactors could take refuge. Once a man who had committed a crime got on top of it he was safe. His pursuers would then say to him, "Your life is now spared, not because you are innocent, but because you are on the Rock of Refuge."

In making my calculations I have allowed thirty years for a generation. I do not think that this is too long a period. Without exception the occupants of the chieftaincies lived to a ripe old age. Very few were killed in battle, and those that were, left grown-up sons to carry on the line. The holders of the chiefly office being the ninth in descent from the first known ancestors, allowing thirty years for a generation, would give 270 years of history. As I made my investigations in 1895, that would take us back to A.D. 1625. A few of the tribes could account for ten generations, which would give another thirty years, and make the end of the sixteenth century the dawn of history in Viti Levu. The genealogies of the principal clans all point to the conclusions I have come to above.

About the period mentioned, a very large influx of strangers took place headed by a chief, the great Ndeng-ei. His origin and arrival in Fiji got lost in the mists of antiquity; ancestral worship deified him, and totemism turned him into a serpent. The early Wesleyan missionaries speak of him only as a god. The Reverend Joseph Waterhouse, who went to Fiji in 1848, and who has written an extremely interesting account of his sojourn in his book *The King and People of Fiji*, speaks thus of Ndeng-ei:

"He is the supreme god of Fiji. He is the creator of the (Fijian) world, of fruits and of men. He it was who deluged the world in punishing the sin of his rebellious creatures. He sends forth his sons to visit the earth, who make their reports to him concerning the piety of its inhabitants. His sons have performed



BAMBOO RAFTS AND TAKIA.

From the Tholo country, in Suva Harbour, with produce from the headwaters of the Waumala.

*From the "Handbook to Fiji," by permission of the Hon. Mr. Colonial Secretary, Fiji.*



miracles on the occasion of these visits. He is also a god of anger and of war.

“He is enshrined in a serpent ; and some say that the hinder part of his body is a stone, significant of eternal duration. He resides in a cave, on a mountain in the Rakiraki district, towards the north-east of Na Viti Levu. When he turns over he causes earthquake. When he moves there is thunder. He is universally known and acknowledged in Fiji ; but is not worshipped, except near his own cave.”

The Reverend Thomas Williams, a great authority in the early history of the Wesleyan Mission, in his *Fiji and the Fijians* speaks of Ndeng-ei in almost similar terms.

Early in 1886 I had occasion to make a pilgrimage to his shrine. A Fijian prophet, a sort of Mahdi, had arisen then, and was spreading sedition in which the worship of Ndeng-ei figured considerably. In a subsequent chapter I shall try and show him in his religious capacity. In the meantime I want to set forth his earthly side.

He arrived at Vunda, on the western coast of Viti Levu, accompanied apparently by a fleet of canoes and a large following who spread out from thence to different parts of the island. The place where he landed is called Vunda, because it means “our origin.” Although the country was then densely occupied by Melanesians, very little is known of them until the arrival of the god-like heroes who accompanied Ndeng-ei, and were adopted as chiefs by the aboriginal people. He himself went up to Nathilau, almost the extreme northern point of Viti Levu, just below the district of Rakiraki. It is grass country, and good timber has to be hauled from the mountain ranges, but everywhere are groves of the *Pandanus odoratissimus*, the Fijian name for which is *vandra*. Its stems are poor and pithy and not fit for permanent use, but they do all right for temporary buildings. Ndeng-ei put up some, using the *vandra* as posts for his house, and his settlement was therefore called Nakau-vandra. *Kau* is the Fijian generic term for timber of any sort, and the whole name simply means “the *vandra* posts.” Old names are always objects of sentimental affection even to us, and we have carried them with us wherever we have settled, witness New England, New York, New Plymouth and the hundreds of others with which we have besprinkled the world. Fijians, with their system of ancestral worship, venerate still more their old original designations, and their migrations can be traced by them. When they left a village site and took up their quarters elsewhere, they took the old name with them. The original population seems to have commenced on the northern and western shores of Viti Levu, and spread from thence to the



southern coast. As the people pushed their way from one settlement to another they took their ancestral names with them. In road-making I have come across many places called Suva, Lami, Rewa, etc., now the names of towns, villages, etc., on the southern coast of Viti Levu where the sea has checked any further migrations.

Nakauvandra is now the name of a rocky mountain spur, one of the ramifications of Mount Victoria that terminates in the sea at Nathilau Point. The summit is 2683 feet above sea-level, and is the shrine of Ndeng-ei. From its being there Nakauvandra has become the Holy Land of Fiji.

I have mentioned that on the coast small kingdoms were established. Of these Verata, Mbureta, Mbua and some others acknowledge that their founders were heroes who came to Fiji with Ndeng-ei. One of his sons, whose name was Wangatanga, landed at Tuva in Nandrong-a, passed through Mavua and established himself at Mbeimana on the Singatoka River, and became the originator of the Ndavutukia tribe. His son, Ndeng-ei's grandson, was called Tui Tonga Levu, which means the King of Great Tonga, which would seem to point to that country as the place from which these adventurers had come. Perhaps, though, they may have come from Samoa. The custom of tattooing seems to throw some light on the subject.

The best notice I have seen about it is in *Viti, an Account of a Government Mission to the Vitian or Fijian Islands*, by Dr. Seeman. He went there in 1860, writes clearly and distinctly, and seemingly with great authority. He says :

“ In Polynesia tattooing seems to have attained its culminating point in the Society Islands and the Marquesas, where both men and women have submitted to it ; proceeding thence eastward to Samoa and Tonga, we find it restricted to the men ; in Fiji to the women, and altogether ceasing in the New Hebrides. Yet, strange to add, Polynesian tradition asserts that the custom was known in Fiji before its being adopted in Samoa and Tonga. Two goddesses, Taema and Tilaifainga, swam from Fiji to Samoa, and on reaching the latter group commenced singing, ‘ Tattoo the men, but not the women ’ (Turner’s *Nineteen Years in Polynesia*, p. 182). Hence the two were worshipped as the presiding deities by those who followed tattooing as a trade ; for a trade it was and is, quite as much as tailoring is in our own country, and requiring by far greater care and caution. The blue tracery once made cannot, like a pair of trousers, be thrown aside when spoilt in the cut, but has to be worn for life, exposed to all the remarks which good and ill-natured friends may be disposed to make.”



A tradition current in Tonga and Fiji corroborates the fact of tattooing having been derived from the latter group. It is stated, that at a remote period the King of Tonga sent a mission to Fiji, in order to ascertain whether, as had been reported, the women of those isles had been tattooed. On reaching the island of Ogea, in the eastern part of Fiji, the mission, with some difficulty, made the natives comprehend that they wished to find out what sex was tattooed (*qia*); to which the Fijians replied, “*Qia na alewa*” (women are tattooed). In obedience to orders, the first person met had been asked, and as a plain answer to a plain question had been obtained the mission departed homewards. There was no other means of remembering the answer than by repeating it continually. This was done without interruption until their canoe reached the Ogea passage, where, the sea becoming rough, apprehensions about the safety of the canoe began to be entertained, and in the ensuing excitement the repetition of the precious words was neglected. Suddenly the neglect was perceived, and it was asked all round what the words were. Somebody replied, “*Qia na tagane*” (men are tattooed), instead of “*Qia na alewa*” (women are tattooed); which mistake, passing unnoticed, was repeated until the crew reached Tonga; and on being reported to the king, he exclaimed, “Oh, it is men not women, that are tattooed! Well, then, I will be tattooed at once.” The example set was speedily followed; hence the custom, that in Fiji the women, in Tonga the men, are tattooed; hence also the name of the Ogea passage, *Qia na tagane*.

According to Fijian tradition the first woman to be tattooed was Andi (Lady) Vilaiwasa, the daughter of the great Ndeng-ei. In all probability her case is simply the first to be recorded, as, before the advent of her father and those who came about the same time, there is no history. The old original tribes know nothing of events prior to the arrival of these strangers, but they have shadowy legends which refer to them as “the coming of the gods,” and to the rivalry which then commenced between them and their ancient deities. It would seem that the tattooing was customary in Viti long before the Polynesian incursion. It is an art not learnt in a day. I have a paper on it, a translation of which is given further on, written by Malakai Navatu, at one time the *Mbuli* or head man of the Mboumbutho, in all likelihood the most purely Melanesian clan in the whole of Fiji.

I have visited the place where Andi Vilaiwasa was tattooed. There is a large boulder there partially hollow like a small cave, affording a shelter from the weather. When I saw it in 1886 the roof was blackened by smoke, and evidently in frequent use. My

guide said, "Here was tattooed the daughter of the great Ndeng-ei, and here too the women of our race still come for the same purpose." This little retreat of the Lady Vilaiwasa is in the valley of the upper Wainimbuka, close to its source. Towering high above is the summit of the Kauvandra mountain, the shrine of her sire. All around are many spots sacred in myths and songs forming veritably the Holy Land of Fiji.

The legend that the two goddesses Taema and Tilaifainga swam to Samoa with the report that tattooing was practised in Fiji, might point to the coming of Ndeng-ei from that country. One of the tribes whose genealogy I have are called the Savaii. That is the name of one of the Samoan islands. Had this clan come from Tonga they would have called themselves the Haapai, from the custom of the people of that country substituting the letter "h" for "s," and there is an island there called Haapai. There is a theory that the Polynesians originally made their way from India, staying at Java en route, and various changes in the spelling and pronunciation of that word is one of the arguments in favour of it. Those who hold this say that we find it as Hawaii in the Sandwich Islands, as Savaii in Samoa, and Haapai in Tonga. As we only find the Tongan "h" in vogue in Nandrong-a, whose people we know adopted a man of that country as their head chief, and that the rest of the people generally use the letter "s," it may be that many of these Polynesian adventurers hailed from Samoa.

Dravisia is the first recorded chief of the Savaii. He was one of those who landed at Tuva, passed through Mavua, and settled further up the Singatoka River. He was one of the first to arrive, and when I was making inquiries in 1895 his tenth descendant held the chieftaincy. That would point to the arrival of the original ancestor in about A.D. 1595, which gives three hundred years of history.

The fact of Ndeng-ei and many other of the Polynesians having landed on the western coasts of Viti Levu, affords a peg to those who maintain the theory that they came from the north-west in making their way into the Pacific. Most probably they did in their original migrations come from there, as both they and the Melanesian inhabitants believe that at death their souls return thither, and all what are called in Fijian the "jumping off places" are generally precipitous cliffs facing the north-west. From these the spirits of the dead wing their way to a far-away island called Qaloqalo, which literally means "swimming from or to," and it is probably a dim mythical recollection of the place from whence they came. In the off season when the trades cease, westerly winds blow sometimes for

days together; the wrack and drift that it brings up causes the Fijians to say, "Lo, a wind from Qaloqalo, the island of the blessed."

Fornander is the great apostle of the theory that the Polynesians came from the north-west. He maintains that they left the Asiatic Archipelago somewhere between A.D. 150-250, taking Fiji on their way, and there they sojourned for some three centuries until they were turned out by the Melanesians. In support of his arguments he says that they left serpent worship behind them, and mentions Ndeng-ei, who was venerated in that guise. But as I have already said, ancestral worship deified him, and his totem being a snake, in course of time he was known under that form only. All the ancestral spirits or originating spirits had totems, whose shapes they could take, resuming their own again at will. That transformation is called *lia*, and Ndeng-ei was *lia eng-ata* (change into snake), that is he could become a serpent at will and a man again whenever he desired. So far from the Polynesians having arrived in Viti Levu so many centuries ago, all the evidence in my possession points to certain bodies of them having made their way thither about the close of the fifteenth century at the earliest. I am speaking about Ndeng-ei and Viti Levu. I think it most probable that prior to his arrival Polynesians were making their way to the eastern isles of Fiji, and effecting settlements there.

I claim that the histories and genealogies in my possession are independent testimonies, and corroborate each other. I did not write them down myself, I had not time to do so. At different times I had the greater part of Viti Levu within my jurisdiction and spent twenty-six years amidst the hill tribes. I have already said that many of the Fijians have distinctly scholarly tastes, and there was always a large native clerical staff under me. The Wesleyans have given a distinctly Biblical atmosphere to our administrative nomenclature. Hence a clerk is always called a "scribe." The head man in my office was dignified as "The Provincial Scribe." Each province contained so many districts with a *Mbuli* or head man, whose secretary or clerk was "The District Scribe." Besides those there were the clerks of the different courts, all of whom also were called scribes. I used to employ these men to write out the legends, histories, and genealogies of their different districts for which I gave them small remunerations out of my own pocket. I started doing so almost immediately I went to live among the hill tribes. Most of the histories I have left untouched until recently, and I am now astonished at the way they fit into each other. Had I read them before I left Fiji and had had time to go into them thoroughly, much more might

have been brought to light. But they have this value now that they are independent testimonies, and not woven to fit a preconceived theory. The manuscripts are, of course, in Fijian. The most interesting is that which gives the history of the Noemalu tribe, a most chief-like clan, with which I was closely associated. Their first known ancestor landed with a considerable band at the extreme southern part of Viti Levu close to the small island of Serua, about A.D. 1635. The name of the hero who led them was Qithatambua, and apparently he came from a place called Emalu. He made his way up the Navua River till he reached Muanavatu, a big central tableland. From thence he went down to the Wainimosi, one of the head affluents of the Singatoka. There he settled, and called the place Emalu, after the country from which he came. He took wives unto himself of the daughters of the land, and his descendants have ever since called themselves the "Noemalu" or dwellers in Emalu. They enthroned and consecrated one of his sons as their chieftain, calling him *Roko Tui Vuna*, which means the sacred and royal founder of the clan. Their history is no shadowy myth; the confederation of villages which enthroned him, the place of it and the laws enacted then, are all duly recorded. His successors and their acts are all also properly chronicled.

The clan alongside of which they settled is called the *Noikoro*, or dwellers in Koro. Their first known ancestor was also a Polynesian, who in all probability was a follower of the great Ndeng-ei, as he made his way inland from the Western coast near Vunda. He apparently did not have a large following like the Emalu here, but he bolstered up his fame by assuring the Koro people that he had arrived riding a shark. As he also was good-looking he was adopted by the tribe as their chief, and when in 1895 I was Acting Resident Commissioner of Tholo West, in which province they resided, the Provincial Scribe was ninth in descent from him.

Everywhere, with one exception, these Polynesians were kindly and hospitably received. Tui Ung-ura, the founder of the Mataku tribe, he who set up the stone calendar of the months, was the only one who met with an untoward fate. It is stated that he too landed at Tuva, and settled in the middle reaches of the Singatoka River. After establishing himself there he was attacked by Nalawatawa, the head of the Nukuvura clan, who slew him. The chronicler says that Nalawatawa was one of the aboriginal chiefs, and took ten bands of warriors to the fight. Time, however, brought revenge, and his tribe ultimately became absorbed in that of the rival whom he killed.

The fact that Ndeng-ei and his followers landed on the north-

western shores of Viti Levu is made an argument that they came from that direction. It is much more likely that the south-east trade swept them into the group through the eastern islands, where very probably they rested and refreshed themselves, and then blew them further along between the two great lands of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. That is the way Bligh came when he made his celebrated boat voyage after the mutiny of the *Bounty* in 1789, shortly after leaving Tahiti. The first known chart of any part of Fiji is that made by him, and for some time it was known as Bligh's Islands. In the original edition of his book, dated 1792, there is a "Chart of Bligh's Islands, Discovered by Lt. William Bligh in the *Bounty's* Launch." The track that he took is shown on it, and on the 7th May, 1789, the boat almost touched the islets of Nananu, just off the extreme northern point of Viti Levu. For many years I was the Stipendiary Magistrate for that part of the island, and the chart is a perfect sketch of that particular spot, and corresponds accurately with the ordnance map. The latter was made when peace prevailed, and when there was every facility for making the survey. How different from the conditions under which Bligh laboured, cramped up in a twenty-three foot boat, drenched with spray and starved. It shows what a resolute and observant officer he was, and that under the most adverse circumstances he could, like his great master, Captain Cook, produce a delineation easily recognisable at the present day.

The south-east trade wind blows fair and straight on to Kamba, the most eastern point of Viti Levu. There the island deflects the wind, splitting it in two, one current following the coast almost north, and the other south. A craft there, to use a nautical term, can bear up and sail with a fair wind down either side of the island. To quote a Fijian *meke* or song :

"Over the point of Rewa sighs the soft south breeze,  
It shakes the blooms off the *sinu* trees."

The two currents rushing down each side of Viti Levu meet at Navula, the extreme western point of the island. One can stand there and see boats coming down either side with the wind behind them, and then as they round it both are taken aback. Besides many other voyages I twice circumnavigated the island in an open boat, and encountered the phenomenon. Navula is just northward from Tuva, and a little south of Vunda where so many of the Polynesians landed. They could have been brought thither by the trade wind, either by way of the northern or southern coasts,



## CHAPTER VIII

### Bygone Religious Ceremonies

THESE is hardly any knowledge of the origin of the Melanesian race which existed in Viti before the Polynesian adventurers appeared upon the scene. As the Fijians shared with them the belief that their souls after death flew away to the north-west, there is ground for thinking that they too came from that direction in a forgotten age, possibly from Asiatic shores, as some of the old ceremonies smack of the ancient religions of the East. The Cult of the Nang-a, which I hope to lay before you in this chapter, was introduced by two mystic individuals who are said to have come from the north-west, and taught certain rites to the people at the place where they landed. Its legend may be the dim record of a distant immigration, and the creed it imparted makes me think of the old time deities, Baal and Ashtoreth.

There may have been an aboriginal population when the Melanesians arrived. The natives of my time used to maintain that the forests and waste spaces were still inhabited by a dwarf or pygmy people, visible only to the faithful, handsome little folk with large fuzzy mops of hair, miniatures of what their own were like until they were cropped in deference to the sanitary requirements of the Wesleyan missionaries.

These little sylvan creatures were called *Veli* and took the place of our own fairies. They loved the woods, the open grasslands and the sparkling brooks, and dwelt in hollow trees, caves and dugouts. They had their own bananas, *kava* and other wild plants from which the varieties now in cultivation have been evolved. There is a beautiful fern called the *Iri ni Veli*, the fan of the fairies, so called from its resemblance to the fronds of the magnificent *Prichardia Pacifica*, from which are made the *viu* or palm fans, one of the insignia of chiefly rank.

A theory has recently been advanced that our own fairies were the survivors of the cave-men, and of the aboriginal race which once populated Britain, and our tales of them a dim recollection of the



past. It may be, too, that the *Veli* are also a misty memory of the former inhabitants of Viti. There is a superstition always latent in the hill country called *Luve-ni-wai*, which rather prettily means "The Water Babies." It existed in my time, and in the very last letters which I received from my old district I heard that it was still going on.

Sir John Thurston, who, before the annexation of Fiji by Great Britain, had been British Consul for so many years, and was Governor from 1888 to 1897 and died in harness, was the first to draw my thought towards the consideration of native myths and legends. He lent me Fornander's book, *The Polynesian Race: Its Origin and Migrations*, De Quatrefarge's *Race Polynésienne*, and many other similar works. I made several journeys inland with him, and he gave me a great deal of most valuable instruction in native affairs. He used to remind me of the kindly captains of my favourite novel writer, Captain Marryat, who endeavoured to be the teachers and friends of their young officers. I remember that after one of my long rambles in the hills, he asked what I thought the ancient religion of the country had been. I promptly answered "phallic," and I think, without doubt, that it was the bedrock upon which the whole system of ancestral worship rested.

Phallic and sacred stones were to be found every here and there in the hill country, one of which I remember particularly well. In 1886 Sir John Thurston directed me to try to ascend Mount Victoria from the east. The *Mbuli* of Mboumbutho was my guide, and we were accompanied by a large following of his men. Our path was the bed of the Nasongo River until the numerous falls and big boulders forced us to leave it and climb into the forest land above. Before we did so, we came to a little strip of shingle beach bordering the stream. In its midst was a small phallus, evidently a fragment or splinter of rock surrounded by a few round water-worn stones. The *Mbuli* laughingly pointed it out to me and said, "That is our *thavuni*." He meant that it was the point or place from which his tribe had sprung. The Native Wesleyan Minister of the District was accompanying us, he whom I have already mentioned as having gone to remonstrate with his equivalent in the other sect when the Roman Catholic Bishop was capsized in the rapids. The sacred emblems were not too heavy to carry off, and I regret to say that my reverend friend bagged them and took them eventually to his European superior. He did not, of course, take them without the permission of the owners, but he begged them after the custom of Fiji (*kerekere*), and the owners did not like to say him nay. That was

the worst of having any of the Wesleyan native clergy with one. They were trained to show contempt for any of the old superstitions. On another occasion I was crossing from the upper Nasongo River to the Wainimbuka valley, and a very rugged pass had to be encountered en route called the Mathang-a. The track was so steep and difficult that it was the custom of those who arrived at its head to pick up a stone and present it as a votive offering to the spirit of the place. As far as I know I am the only European who ever visited the spot. After the guide, I was the first of the party to reach it. There was a long bough with a fine flat surface extending from an old and hoary tree, tightly packed with pebbles, deposited there by passers-by as the price of their safety. The guide explained the custom to me, and I offered a stone and went on. I had not got many steps away when I heard a loud crash and looking backwards, saw that a village Wesleyan teacher had swept off the stones with his long walking staff. I was very angry, and remonstrated with the perpetrator of the outrage, but he was supported by the conviction of having performed a righteous deed, and I was too exhausted by the severity of the climb to say all I should like to have done.

This Mathang-a Pass is the last of three remarkable gaps stretching in an almost straight line between the watershed of the Nasongo and the Wainimbuka Rivers and the coast range at the back of Rakiraki, on the northern coast of Viti Levu. They can be seen from many of the lofty ridges inland, and form a striking feature of the landscape, being seemingly equidistant from each other, the intervals being about five miles. From Mathang-a, the last of them, to the sea at Rakiraki is twenty miles, and from thence almost due north it is fifty miles to Mbua Bay on the south-west coast of Vanua Levu. There in the days of yore that god-like canoe, the Rong-o-Voka, the Far Famed Ebb, lay at anchor under the command of Roko Ua, the Noble Flood Tide. Orders were given to step the mast and get the magic craft under way. But even the gods are sometimes fallible, and before the foot of the mast could be got into the chock which kept it in position, it slipped and fell and seventy miles away the crutch at its head, through which the main halliards passed, crashed into the Mboumbutho hills and cut the gorge at Mathang-a, and made also the Pass of Mbolei just behind Rakiraki, and the gap at Wailiwaliva on the Wainimbuka. Nothing daunted, the heroic crew once more made the attempt, and sweated the gigantic mast into its proper place. A great clod cut from Mathang-a stuck in the crutch and fell into Mbua Bay, and formed an island as the wonderful spar reached the perpendicular. This is a true story, as the island can

be seen to this day. It has the same coloured earth and rocks and trees similar to those growing at Mathang-a : therefore there can be no doubt about it.

The whole region round the three gaps is the home of much ancient lore, and is inhabited mostly by purely Melanesian tribes, prominent among which are the Mboumbutho. These clans call themselves the *Qelendina*, which means true earth or soil, and it reminded me of the French term of *vieille roche* as applied to the old nobility. They used to celebrate a great mystic annual yam festival called the *Ruku*, a word synonymous with *yoni*, the Hindu symbol of the fertility of nature. It took place in the interval between the harvesting of the old yam crop and the planting of the new, the staff of life of the Fijians as bread is to us. The yams were dug at the end of the cool season, in about July or August. In September the trees, which are the harbingers of spring, began to show their flowers and heralded the near approach of the gods of creation, who in their beneficence visited the earth to impart their fertilising essences. During their stay it was imperative to maintain the utmost silence lest they should be frightened away. Before their arrival the priests consulted the ancestral spirits, and then proclaimed the time for the holding of the *Ruku*.

It lasted for ten days, and was a season of great rejoicing and festivity, and marked the division between the old and new year, and was to all intents and purposes the same as our New Year Day.

In preparation for it great logs of firewood were brought in and placed point to point in the various *Mbure* or tribal halls, especially in the little *Mbure Kalou* or abode of the ancestral spirit. At dawn of the first day of the *Ruku* these logs were kindled, those in the shrine being the first to be lit. From then until noon the people had to remain recumbent on their mats, and maintain the most absolute silence for fear of disturbing the gods. All doors were kept closed and nobody was allowed to go outside. After midday it was permissible to cook and eat food.

The day following was also a holy one, and the people kept within the villages and were not allowed to bathe. Those who did so went mad, from which arose a proverb, "Why are you such a fool; perhaps you bathed during the *Ruku*?" It was believed, too, that children born at this time grew up stupid and would die ere long.

The Fijians have a system of begging from each other called *kerekere*. They will tell you that it prevents them from ever amassing property of any sort, as when anything is asked according to this custom of the country refusal is impossible. A man may

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work for a month and buy a nice coat or a warm shirt, but he knows as soon as he goes home it will be *kere'd* from him. Native reformers have protested against it, and passed many resolutions in the Provincial Councils for its abolition, which after a short time of observance always fell into desuetude during my sojourn in Tholo. The custom was too strenuously rooted, and its eradication required more perseverance than the casual Fijian cared to maintain.

During the *Ruku* the custom of *kerekere* is intensified, and it was then called *kanda*. It was a period of Saturnalia; nothing could be refused, and it was a time of universal licence altogether indescribable.

The yam is a convolvulus, and when its young vines shoot forth they are trained up the stems of the *sina*, as the tall native spear-grass, which flowers like our pampas-grass, is called. That is its name in Tholo, but in the Mbauan dialect it is known as *thina*. As the *Ruku* is the feminine symbol, so the *sina* or *thina* is the masculine. In many of the maritime districts a lecherous deity, a sort of Priapus, was worshipped under the name of *Ndau thina*. Tied up in bundles these reeds are used as torches, which are also called *sina* or *thina*, and the name is now applied to our candles, and all sorts of lamps and lights introduced by the *vavalang-i* or white foreigners. On certain occasions obscene dances suggestive of married life were performed, and the virile emblems were then represented by long bundles of spear-grass tied up in the same way as torches.

*Kanda*, the intensified form of *kerekere* in vogue during the *Rukuruku*, simply means to climb. When the young shoots of the yam appear, stems of the *sina* are stuck in the ground for them to *kanda* or climb. Then there are great games of spear throwing called *tinga*, and matches are played between village and village for which special pitches are prepared. The spears are merely the shafts of the *sina* with heads of hard wood called *ulu toa*. I have seen a few of the latter fashioned from the ivory of the cachalot teeth, but these are few and far between. Some of these *ulu toa* are said to be men and some women. In the former there are sockets which fit into the *sina* stems, and in the latter grooves, into which the spear is inserted, and the two together may be symbolical of the union of the sexes. All this is redolent of phallic worship, but my remarks here are but inferences deduced from the actual meaning of native words. The people themselves have more or less forgotten the more ancient parts of their faith, and phallicism has been lost in ancestral religion. I never could get my native friends to explain the reason of their customs, and was afraid to cross-examine too closely. Fijians are



intuitive and quickly grasp what one would like to be told, and in their generous desire to please frame their replies accordingly.

Yams are best grown by men, and the *ndalo* or edible arum by women; in fact the latter, although it may be planted and cultivated by males, only flourishes really under female management. During the holding of the *Ruku*, bundles of *tikau*, the wild yam, were brought to the *Mbure* wrapped up in turmeric leaves, and wound round with the vines of the *wakele*, another variety of wild yam. They were placed upon a heap of *ndalo* stalks resting on a bed of fragrant plants. The presiding priest then presented them as a thank-offering to the ancestral spirits, offering up this prayer :

“Oh ! gods of our fathers, listen to us that our yams may flourish and our *ndalo* bring forth their increase ; let our past crop which we have just garnered be as nothing to that which we shall gather this next season.”

I have drawn most of this from the account written for me by an Mboubutho chief, and will conclude with his own words :

“During the ten days of the *Ruku* it was *tambu* to visit the yam and *ndalo* fields. It was the time of the gods who were called the *Sevunganga*, the Mighty First Fruits. It was the division, too, of the seasons, after which the people might go to their gardens, and greatly indeed would the crops then flourish because of the prayers and supplications which had been made.”

These annual yam festivals were universal throughout old Fiji. With the *Qelendina* or original inhabitants they were called the *Ruku*, and in other parts the *Yambaki*, *Baki*, *Yevaki*, and other variations of the word *yambaki*, which means either a year or a yam. From the planting of the tuber till its maturity, and its return to the earth again as seed for another crop, was practically a year, and I have heard the word *yambaki* used indiscriminately either for a year or a crop of yams. Fijians have now adopted our calendar of twelve months as their year, which, however, they still call *yambaki*.

The cult of the *Nang-a* had also an annual festival, which some are apt to confuse with the *Ruku* or *Mbaki*, but it is altogether distinct. There is one point of resemblance, the Saturnalia, or general licence which obtained then. It was a rite of initiation, and indescribable orgies were perpetrated, quite unfit to be recorded by the polite pen. So far from silence being observed pandemonium prevailed, and the ordinary virtuous and staid people of Tholo then seemed to lose their senses altogether. One of the *meke* or chants describe it as a song or dance of the mad.

There is a long legend, too lengthy for such a work as this.

Condensed briefly from the native manuscript given me by Ro Joni Kuranduandua, for many years a Native Stipendiary Magistrate, and my colleague on the bench of the Provincial Court of Tholo East, it is as follows :

### THE STORY OF THE NANG-A

It is said the Nang-a was brought hither by two individuals named Visina and Rukuruku. They drifted across the Big Ocean, and passing through the Yasawa Group landed at Vitong-o on the north-west coast of Viti Levu. Visina arrived first and fell into a deep slumber, and slept on till Rukuruku landed at the same place. Where Visina rested sprang the wild turmeric, and his followers when celebrating his rites anointed their bodies with its roots made up into a paste. At the spot where Rukuruku reached the shore there grew the candle-nut tree (*Aleurities triloba*), and the black made from its shell is that with which the votaries of that sect paint their bodies when they go to the sacred precincts of the Nang-a.

Conferring together they said, "Let us go to the Chief of Vitong-o and ask him to divide his people between us, that we may teach them our mysteries, for which purpose have we come to Viti." They preferred their request to the Chief who replied : "Good, divide the people between you and instruct them in the rites of the Nang-a, which you say is the name of your cult."

Visina and Rukuruku divided the people, separating them into three parts, the old men whom they called *Vere*, or the priests of the Order, the *Vunilolo*, the young manhood, who were the warriors and mainstay, and the *Vila Vou*, the youthful members just verging on puberty. The descendants of these men taught their children what they learnt then, and the knowledge has been imparted from generation to generation. The rites of Visina are different from those of Rukuruku, and it was forbidden under pain of sudden death or madness for the votaries of the one sect to divulge its mysteries to the other. They were celebrated annually in a solemn ceremony called the "*Solevu ni Vila Vou*," when the novices of the tribe were made acquainted with the secrets of creation. As it was a matter of tribal and brotherly love, although the votaries of Visina and Rukuruku might not tell each other their respective practices, each year certain of the youths were exchanged between these two divisions. By mutual arrangement their annual festivals alternated with each other.

*Nang-a* are stone enclosures each with four altars, the first of which was built at Vitong-o and dedicated to the use of Visina, the



pattern of which has since been followed by those tribes who became followers of the mystery.

That shortly is the narrative of Ro Joni Kuranduandua, which purports to be an account of the rites practised by the followers of *Visina*. The people had become Christians before I arrived among them, and I learnt from other sources what was inculcated by the adherents of Rukuruku, that is, as much as they thought they might decently tell. They had by then begun to feel shame at the wild revels which they held at these great festivals.

Reading between the lines, it may be inferred that the cult of *Visina* corresponded with that of Baal, and *Rukuruku* with Ashtoreth, the ancient deities of the creative and productive powers of nature. In speaking of the feast of the *Ruku* as practised by the purely Melanesian tribes of central inland Viti Levu, I have mentioned the simple meaning of *sina*, the native spear-grass, and of its being the masculine symbol, and *Ruku* the feminine. *Visina* is but the plural of *sina*, and implies a plump of spears or the male sex generally, or a torch, and *Rukuruku* is the diminutive of *Ruku* and significant of women. The candle-nut, the special adjunct of her followers, is also a source of fire and heat. Its kernels impaled on a splint of *sina* or spear-grass were used as candles until kerosene lamps took their place.

Fire and fecundity seem to be mixed up mysteriously together. Nearly three hundred years ago one of the younger brothers of Tombayawene, the god-like ancestor of the Vatusila tribe in Tholo North, let the sacred fire go out in the great *Mbure* at Vandranasing-a, the capital village. His enraged elder and chieftain banished him for this offence, and crossing the main divide he settled in Tholo East, where I made the acquaintance of his descendants when I went to live in the hill country.

*Nang-a* in the dialect of Noemalu, Noikero, and their affiliated clans means simply a mat, a heap of which forms a bed. In a subsequent chapter on marriage customs an account will be given of the spreading of mats for the nuptial couch when a wedding takes place. The great yearly festival of the *Nang-a* was symbolical of the mystic bed of the tribe when the rising generation was initiated and taught the great secret of life.

The stone enclosures where the weird rites took place were built at night by the light of the full moon, and the initiation and the solemn feasts held in connection with it occurred under similar conditions. In my opinion those of Rukuruku were altogether more

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terrible than those of Visina, and as becoming her sex, suggestive of the birth of children.

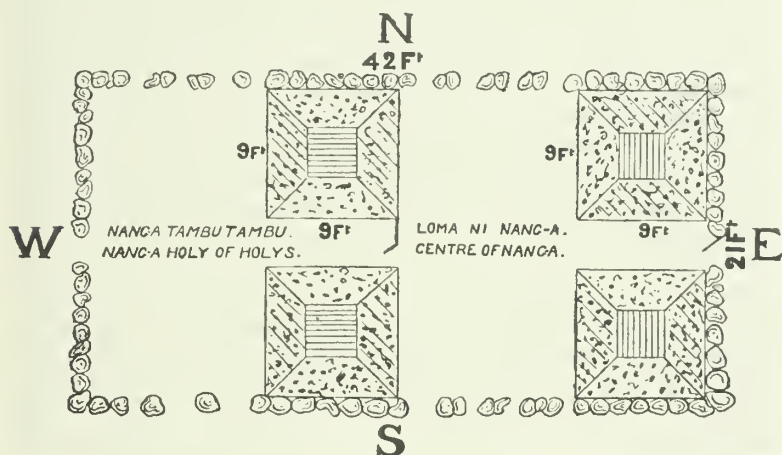
In 1886, I think, the Noemalu people showed me one of their *Nang-a* at Wainamu, a small brook, on whose level banks the sacred enclosure had been constructed. It faced east and west like our churches, and was merely a parallelogram marked out on a grassy lawn with rough water-worn stones taken from the stream. The eastern and western bases were twenty-one feet broad, and the northern and southern forty-two feet long. At each corner were pyramids of stones nine feet square at the base, five feet high, with a flat top surface of six feet by four, which formed altars upon which were laid the offerings to the gods. When I visited the place there were still old and decayed *tambua* on them, honeycombed with age and exposure to the weather. The enclosure within the altars was called the Middle Nang-a, and the narrow lanes between them were the entrances by which the novices crawled in and out. Beyond the western altars was an outer court called the *Nang-a Tambutambu*, which is best translated as the Holy of Holys, in which the *Vere* or priests awaited the novices, and which usually contained a small but handsome *Mbure Kalou* or temple. It is much too long a subject to give here the details and the difference in the rituals of *Visina* and *Rukuruku*, which were complicated and minute. I would merely add that initiation of the boys did not take place until after they had undergone the ordeal of circumcision, about which I propose to give a chapter presently.

I saw three Nang-a enclosures and found them all similar in appearance and measurements. I have a rough plan of the Nang-a at Wainamu, which it quite close to Narokorokoyawa, the chief village of Noemalu. In the line of stones every here and there were gaps through which the votaries might pass in and out. It was strictly *tambu* to stride over the stones, and the proper paths had to be used under pain of sickness and death. The interiors were smooth lawns of the native couch-grass, and all around were ornamental and fragrant shrubs.

There is a curious resemblance between many of the African languages and Fijian. They seem to have the same liquid sound, and mostly end with vowels. The Noemalu tribe calls its rite of initiation the "Nang-a." In Sir Harry Johnston's most interesting book, *The History of the Slave*, an account is given of a similar ceremony practised by some of the aboriginal people of the Western Sudan, where the medicine-man is called the *Nganga*. One of our protectorates is called Tanganyika from the lake of that name. In

Fijian *tang-a ni ika* means a net for fish. The East African names : Mombasa, Uganda, Rewa, Kalambo, Gondakoro, Koro, Nakuru, have their counterparts in Fijian. The similarity is very marked, but not easily accountable.

Of the worship and cult of Ndeng-ei, the great creator and serpent god, I must tell you hereafter. It obtruded itself very much during my time, its doctrine being preached by one Navosavakandua, who posed as a prophet and compounded a new religion founded on the old Fijian myths, the Bible and Christianity. It was a mad doctrine, and disturbed the peace of the hill people and myself. It led to many adventures which I will relate as they occurred, and which are the best exponents of the faith and how it affected its adherents.



GROUND PLAN OF NANG-A AT WAINAMU, NEAR NAROKOROROWA

Visited and measured by the Author

## CHAPTER IX

### Conscience

“**B**E sure your sin will find you out.”

Conscience troubles the Fijian a good deal, especially in old age and sickness. In former times, before the advent of Christianity, when the memory of past sins disturbed a man's mind he would say “I have transgressed the *Lawa Ruku* (the law of ancient Fijian ancestor worship), therefore must I make a sacrifice.” That could be done in many ways such as making large offerings of pigs and yams to the spirits of the dead, who would consume their spiritual essences, leaving the material parts for the delectation and sustenance of their priest and votaries. But the most efficacious propitiation was human blood. When human bodies were not available the supplicant sinner would get his young relations to provide the blood by undergoing the rite of circumcision.

I have often asked men who looked sick and ill what was the matter and have been told that they were suffering for their past misdeeds. Most probably in many instances they were paying for the excesses of youth, but in their own minds they thought it was retribution for wickedness. Many and many a time have I been told that “The wages of sin is death.” That is a text which the natives believe most implicitly.

Under the old law and at the present time, open confession is the best remedy for transgressors. Sin is the cause of so many ailments, which are aggravated by concealment. Therefore people on beds of sickness are always exhorted by their relatives and friends to make clean breasts of all their shortcomings. But those in such circumstances very often are unable to make a wholesome survey of their past, and magnify the veriest peccadilloes into deadly sins. I have known a whole community set by the ears by the morbid confession of a dying woman who turned her harmless and innocent flirtations and friendships into something infinitely worse. In olden days club law would have been resorted to after such an occasion. As that was impossible under our British peace I was applied to, and I

had great difficulty in persuading the offended parties that there was absolutely no evidence to support their charges.

With this extreme conscientiousness is mingled a great deal of generous sympathy. It may be recollected that when one of the old men confessed to having partaken of the flesh of the murdered missionary, another, not to leave his friend in the cold, came forward and said that he too had strangled his own mother in the bad old days. As I go along I shall have similar instances to bring forward.

No enterprise is expected to succeed when accompanied by the loss of virtue. The hereditary priests by incantation were able to make men invulnerable. The ceremony is called *vondivondi*, and once only did I ever see it being done. I was very young at the time, and serving in the first Mba Expedition in 1871.

We were indeed an undisciplined mob, and it has always been a standing wonder to me that the *kai Tholo* or hillmen did not cut us to pieces. We straggled about, and did everything wrong from a military point of view. However, our enemy was fighting us *vaka Viti* or according to native ideas, and that was our salvation. We were not acquainted with their game, but on this occasion we certainly played it according to the rules. We were on high ground, with the village we were about to attack below us, and were waiting for our stragglers to come up before we rushed it. In the *rara* or public square of the village were gathered the warriors of the place, and they were doing the *vondivondi* prior to going into action. They were quite at our mercy then, and a well-directed volley would have wiped them all out, but fortunately for some reason or other it was not delivered. I think just at that time we were too exhausted with the severity of our march over the steep hills, and were taking a brief rest in which to regain our wind. It was a scene never to be forgotten. A rushing stream flowed between us and the enemy, and on a little plateau above it they were gathered together in full war paint, squatted down and beating the ground with bamboo drums which emitted a hollow booming sound.

Presently a few men detached themselves from this body and ran towards us in a series of zigzags, fluttering pennons of white native cloth and shouting out abuse and defiance. This roused us, and we were getting ready to fire when the head chief of the coast men, our native auxiliaries, rushed up to our General and begged that we should not shoot, saying that those approaching had come merely to *mbolimboli* or challenge us to fight, and that it was not the custom of the country to molest such messengers. So we held our hands and listened to their proclamations. We were told that we had come to



the wrong place (and so we had), and that the murderers of the *vavalangi* (white men) did not belong to them, that as it was raining hard, was cold and nightfall nigh, they would receive us hospitably, and on the morn we could depart in peace. If not, well then they had plenty of firewood ready, the ovens were hot and they would kill and eat us all. Our reply was to cheer and charge, whereupon the enemy fired their village, so that at any rate we should have to spend the night out in the open and in the rain. After doing that they dispersed in all directions. I am glad to say that we did not kill any of them. By the irony of fate I afterwards became the Resident Commissioner of the people of the district where this village was. My native colleague, who used to sit on the bench with me when we held the quarter sessions, was a boy on the other side at the time of the fight and we often fought it over again. The remembrance of it has tempted me into becoming garrulous, but I was led into it by a desire to say something about the incantation to induce a state of invulnerability.

When it failed the priests had always excellent excuses. To render it efficacious the young men must be even as those with David when he begged the hallowed bread from Ahimelech the priest (1 Samuel xxi. 1-6). To succeed in any undertaking for the time being both men and women must remain virtuous. Communal undertakings are proclaimed by the village crier at night when all the people are supposed to be at home. Mr. Carew told me he once heard a great fishing expedition so given out, to be undertaken by the people of the place, men, women and children. It was greeted by roars of laughter, and when he asked the reason he was told of the clever *double-entendre* by which the crier had intimated that all should be as David's young men. It is, however, unprintable and cannot be given here.

Old Nandurutamata, the "man post," was a great relater of legends and native tales. He told me one which he said accounted for the relationship between the Noikoro and Vatusila tribes. The *kalou vu*, or original ancestor of the former, was mentioned in the chapter on the Polynesian adventurers as having told the Noikoro people, who adopted him, that he had arrived at Viti riding on a shark's back. The Vatusila were the slayers of Mr. Baker, and their first ancestor, too, was a very light-skinned Polynesian.

Nandurutamata in recounting this legend was endeavouring to instruct me in the genealogies of the two tribes and their inter-marriages. I thought, though, that I detected in it the moral at the head of this chapter, "Be sure your sin will find you out."



Native storytellers are usually prolix, and given to repetition. They mimic the different characters, and employ falsetto for the female parts. It makes their tales very long, but to curtail them causes a loss of idiom, and spoils the genius of the language. Presuming, therefore, on the good nature of my readers I venture to give Nandurutamata's legend as he told it to me. It is called

### TUVOU OF NANG-ATANG-ATA.

Ung-oneva (the Noikoro hero) had besides sons, two daughters by means of whom the Noikoro and Vatusila tribes became related. The elder was called Tuvou of Nang-atang-ata (her father's village) and the younger Lewatini. One day the elder came into her father's presence and said, "Oh! father, I am going to Tombayaweni, the Lord of Vandranasing-a and chief of the Vatusila, to be his wife."

The father replied, "Very good, my child, but remember that a wicked man, a betrayer of damsels, lives on the road."

Tuvou dressed herself in black *masi*, and, armed with a club, started for Vandranasing-a. She passed by Talatalavula, climbed the hill of Malua and came to Numbutautau, the stronghold of Tuitharatharasala, the betrayer of damsels, who dwelt on a rock there. He said, "Come into the house and spend the night and I will send the old woman here to dig food for us."

Tuvou refused at first, but being pressed consented to remain. The old woman brought food from the gardens, Tuitharatharasala prepared a pig, and when all was ready they feasted and afterwards retired to rest. When Tuvou's respiration became long and drawn, Tuitharatharasala, to find out whether she really was asleep, jumped out of the house and yelled out, "Oi, Oi, Yalatina is in flames, the people are quarrelling amongst themselves." The girl heard him and told him to hurry over there and try to save some of the black *masi*, the staple manufacture of the place. Then he went inside, and presently when Tuvou's breathing became long-drawn again he jumped outside and shouted out, "Mong-ondro is on fire, and they are killing each other." Then the girl told him to hasten thither to see if he could save anything. So he returned to the house, and when Tuvou once more seemed to be falling asleep he yelled out, "The *kai* Ra are burning each other out." This time there was no answer, the girl was fast asleep, and Tuitharatharasala went and lay down beside her. When she woke up it was just about dawn, and refusing all offers of food she started off on her journey.

She descended to Naveiyaraki, and from thence went right on to

Vandranasing-a. When the Vatusila people of that place saw her they said, "Hullo, Tuvou of Nang-atang-ata, what are you doing here?"

And she said, "I have come to be the wife of Tombayaweni, the Lord of Vandranasing-a." So they sent a messenger to Tombayaweni, who came down with his big club, and said:

"Hullo, Tuvou, what have you come for?"

To which she replied, "To be your wife."

He answered, "Good, lead on,; let us go and bathe." And they went to the pool in the river called Riri-nai-ka, which is near to the village of Namaururu. When they got there Tombayaweni said to Tuvou, "You go in first and pull up the rock that is on the bottom."

She dived down and tugged and tugged away, but could not move it. Over and over again she went down, but could not manage the task. So Tombayaweni said, "Come out of that, and let us go home." And they returned to Vandranasing-a. There was a magic red coco-nut tree there, which he told her to climb. She went right up to the very top and then he said, "Shake the nuts and find out if there is any water in them." She did it three times, and he asked her how they were, and she answered that they were nuts fit for drinking, and then he ordered her to count them and she did so like this:

"One, one, fruit of the Red Coco-nut,  
Two, two, fruit of the Red Coco-nut,  
Three, three, fruit of the Red Coco-nut,  
Four, four, fruit of the Red Coco-nut,  
Five, five, fruit of the Red Coco-nut,  
Six, six, fruit of the Red Coco-nut,  
Seven, seven, fruit of the Red Coco-nut,  
Eight, eight, fruit of the Red Coco-nut,  
Nine, nine, fruit of the Red Coco-nut,  
And the tenth is TUI THARATHARASALA, the sweeper of  
the way."

So Tombayaweni said, "Come down," and she did so, and he said, "You have sinned on the road and your virtue has departed, therefore you could not lift the big stone at Riri-nai-ka, and when you counted the nuts you had to mention the name of your lover." Then Tombayaweni slew her with Ndrausa, his renowned club, fashioned out of an uprooted sapling.

Thus perished Tuvou, and the news travelled home to her father and kinsfolk. When her younger sister Lewatini heard of it she went to her sire and said:

"Oh, my chief and father, be of a good mind and let me go and be

the wife of Tombayaweni of Vandranasing-a. My sister was only slain because she sinned and parted with her virtue on the road : I beg that you let me go, and let me replace her."

He gave his permission and she departed.

Like her sister when she got as far as Numbutautau she encountered the licentious Tuitharatharasala (who once more employed the same wiles, which the narrator here gives in much longer detail, as the betrayer did not succeed in lulling the watchful Lewatini to sleep, and he had to go on with his devices until morning broke. Omitted here for the sake of brevity.)

Then the birds twittered in the trees, dawn came, and the evil Tuitharatharasala knew that he had been baulked. He raved and fumed but Lewatini only laughed at him and asked for some breakfast. He refused to give her any, but said that she could go and look for some herself. She said, "What are you angry about? If you chose to sit up chattering like a madman all night instead of sleeping like an ordinary person, it is your own fault." So she ate her breakfast, went on her way and arrived safely at Vandranasing-a.

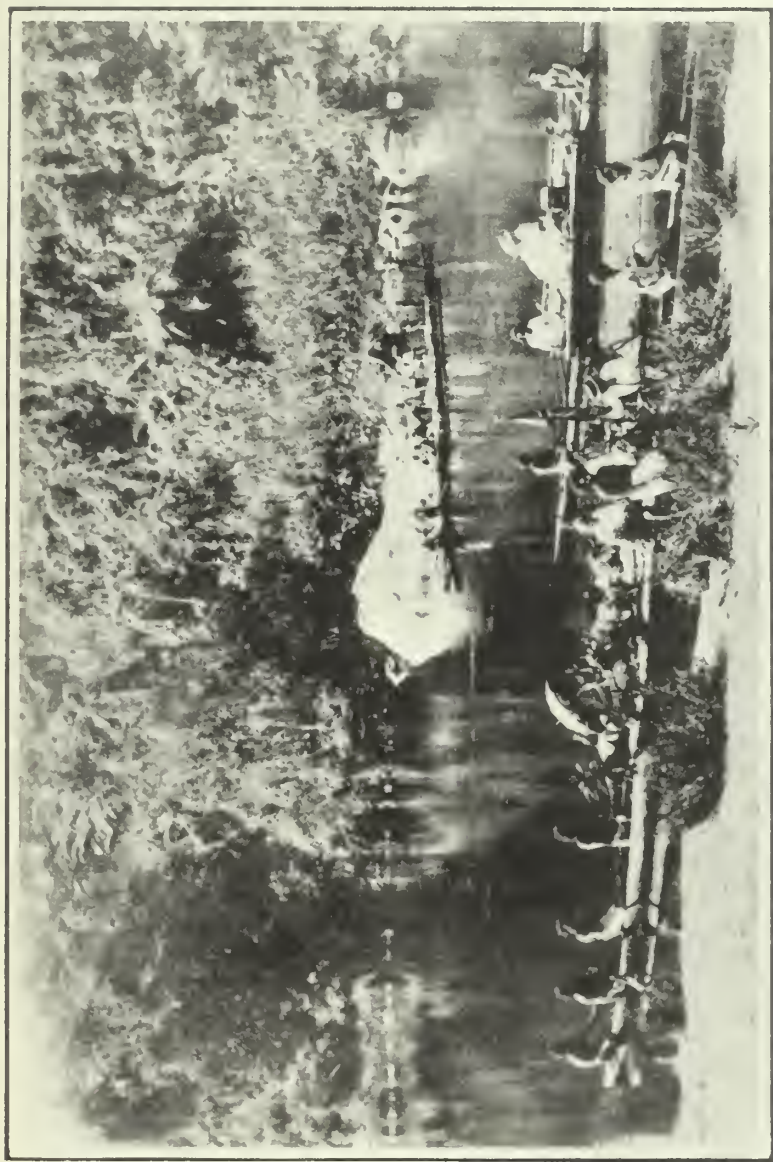
There the people questioned her as they had her sister, Tuvou, and Tombayaweni came down again with the big club Ndrausa. He took her to bathe at the same pool, and told her to dive into it and fetch up the big stone at the bottom. In she went and brought it up the very first time, and there it is to this day as a witness of the truth of this history, and anyone can go and see it. (*Note*.—It is about the size of a motor-bus, but then Lewatini was of divine origin.) Then they returned to the village and Tombayaweni told her to climb the magic coco-nut and count the cluster of nuts at the top; and this is how she did it :

"One, one, fruit of the Red Coco-nut,  
Two, two, fruit of the Red Coco-nut,  
Three, three, fruit of the Red Coco-nut,  
Four, four, fruit of the Red Coco-nut,  
Five, five, fruit of the Red Coco-nut,  
Six, six, fruit of the Red Coco-nut,  
Seven, seven, fruit of the Red Coco-nut,  
Eight, eight, fruit of the Red Coco-nut,  
Nine, nine, fruit of the Red Coco-nut,  
And the tenth is TOMBAYAWENI!!!"

Then she came down and went home with Tombayaweni, and after a while she bore him a son, whose name was Saukiyata. When he had grown up he took to wife Lewayanitu, a Koro woman, by

whom he had a son, Roko Tui Vuna. He married Lewaivavu, they had two sons; the elder was Kulunandakai and the second Katakataimoso. Kulunandakai took for wife a woman of Naroyaso, whose name was Kurumundu, and by her he had two sons, Navindulu and Katakataimoso, and Katakataimoso is to-day *Buli* of Vatusila.

Thus, Sir, concluded old Nandurutamata, is it that Noikoro and Vatusila are branches of the same tree.



THE V'RAMOTHE OR "CAUSER OF SLEEP."

With Lady Thurston and suite on board. The *takia* beyond had on it the Resident Commissioner, Mr. Carw, and the bathful Auanas.

*Photo by Sir John Thurston.*





## CHAPTER X

### Everyday Totemism

**T**HIS is not a scientific disquisition on totemism, but just a simple endeavour to show how it figures in everyday life amongst the hill people of Viti Levu. It is, too, another link in the chain of evidence connecting the light-coloured Polynesians with the original Melanesian population, who adopted the new-comers and made them their ancestral gods.

According to tradition Tunakauvandra, i.e. the "Stander of the Kauvandra," otherwise the great Ndeng-ei, sent forth his followers to each of the leading tribes of Viti Levu with orders to increase and multiply. It has already been set forth how they went to Noikoro, Noemalu, Vatusila, Mavua, Mbeimana and to many other chief places. Each took with them their different totems: animal, floral and vegetable, which became the cognizances and badges of the people to whom they joined themselves.

The legend which recounts this dispersal distinctly avers that the common people were already on the spot, and were sought for afterwards by Ndeng-ei's heroes. In the history of Nandrau, one of the most renowned tribes of the interior, a narrative is given of the wanderings of Tui Talandrau, the first known holder of the chieftaincy. His departure from the Kauvandra is mentioned, and the route he took until he arrived amongst those who adopted him. His track is shown in the map which depicts the various journeys of these followers of Ndeng-ei. Wherever Tui Talandrau rested on his way, and was questioned as to where he was going, he always replied that he was seeking his people who had preceded him. Time and the lack of written records have obscured these faraway events, and only the oral testimony handed down from generation to generation is available. The constant assertion, that the common people arrived before the chiefs, tends very much to point out that when these Polynesian adventurers came upon the scene they found the Melanesians, to whom they appeared as gods, already in possession of the countryside.

It has already been mentioned in a previous chapter how the original

ancestors of the chiefly families could transform themselves into their animal totems, and resume their human shape when they desired so to do. Therefore members of tribes must not eat the animal whose form their ancestral god had been used to assume. That would be tantamount to eating one's own relations and would be followed by dire retribution, such as befell Ro Vuthango, the *Vunivalu* of Noemalu, who told Mr. Carew that all his teeth had fallen out because he had eaten one of his brothers for violating his family honour. Fruit and vegetable totems may be partaken of, but not the flesh of the animal symbol of the tribe.

In all savage customs there seem to be many discrepancies and anomalies. A clan of the Vuanangumu, a large and important tribe, with many off-shoots residing in the very centre of the Viti Levu hill country, has for its totem one of the numerous species of crayfish or prawns which abound in the mountain streams. These they may eat, if they do not peel the skins off. They also provide them as food for visitors, whom the women closely watch. If the latter proceed to peel and eat the prawns the women beat their guests savagely, even branding them with burning fire-sticks. This has to be taken good-naturedly, but the men in retaliation may catch the girls and hug and kiss them. There is something similar to this in the customs that used to be attendant on turtle fishing when the men returning from it were attacked and severely handled by the women. There the native chronicler remarks, "It was not a matter to create anger, but simply an opportunity for rough flirtations."

Old Fijian life was very much akin to the games played by our own children which entail forfeits redeemable by strange penalties. Men were not allowed to mention in presence of women of another tribe the latter's totems under pain of suffering something at their hands. We once had a young Bauan, a corporal in the police at the Tholo East Government Station. The Provincial Court or quarter sessions was being held and there was a great concourse in attendance. In one of the houses *yangona* or *kava* had been brewed, of which the corporal had a cup. After drinking it he gave, according to the custom of the country, his toast. That always comes afterwards in Fiji, instead of before as with us. It is always a wish for something that you desire. In this instance it was a particular sort of plantain that the corporal thought he fancied just then. It happened to be the vegetable totem of the Noemalu, a young girl of which was sitting near. She had a short butcher's knife in her hand, an implement much affected for weeding and clearing purposes. She instinctively hit out and inflicted a slight flesh wound. The lordly Bauan, a scion of

the royal tribe, was much enraged that a despised Tholo or hill girl had tapped some of his aristocratic blood, and promptly went to the native magistrate and filed an information of assault and battery. In due time it came up before the Provincial Court, otherwise myself sitting with my Fijian colleague. The corporal said a good deal about the quantity of his blood which had been spilled and the heinousness of the offence. We, however, dismissed the case, as there had been no felonious intent; the injury was but a mere scratch and inflicted on the spur of the moment in pursuance of an ancient custom.

You must not eat your own totem, but there is no restriction upon furnishing your friends with it as an article of diet, with the understanding that they take it at their own risk, subject to certain pains and penalties such as have already been mentioned in regard to eating the prawn totem of the Vuanangumu. Generally when visitors were entertained who were eaters of their hosts' totems, temporary huts were erected for them just outside their friends' village. Upon their departure these dwellings and everything that had been used by way of drinking vessels, cooking utensils, etc., were burnt and the place subjected to "cleansing fires." A great friend of mine was Saimone Ung-onétha (Simon Badboy), the *Mbuli* of the Nang-oné-ni-tholo (the Children of the Hills). The totem of that tribe is the large freshwater eel which abounds in the Wainimala, upon which river their villages are. Saimone was a lay preacher of the Wesleyans and a most intelligent and useful man, who gave me much information on old usages. He told me that his people were gradually beginning to lose the ancient superstition and that the younger generation no longer refrained from eating eels. But it was the cause of great trepidation to the elders of the tribe in whom the belief was ingrained. He is my authority for saying that temporary habitations were put up for visitors, which were afterwards destroyed. The Wainimala is noted for its fat eels, which are a great source of attraction to the friends of the tribe.

According to tradition an old and hoary eel, the totem of this tribe, the Children of the Hills, lived in a deep pool of the Wainimala, close to Nakorosuli, their chief village. Simon said that he was occasionally seen swimming solemnly round his sacred precincts, and that if I were patient and watched long enough I might perhaps be able to see him. I had not time for the vigil, and I doubt very much if I should have discerned the venerable shrine of the divine progenitor of my friends. I lacked the eye of faith, and probably the dweller in the pool had not a material body, and what was seen there was only his astral form. The Yalatina people, a Tholo North clan,

who live on the head waters of the Mba River, close to Nandarivatu, where I resided, had also an eel totem. His haunt was a rocky pool in the rugged and inaccessible Savatu source of the Mba. His appearance in the depth which he occupied presaged the death of some chief of the tribe. I was told, though, that it would be of no use for *me* to go and watch the pool as the eel was not a real one, but just a ghost and only visible to the members of his family.

It has been already mentioned that when sacrifices are made to the gods, they being spirits only consume the intangible essences of the offerings, leaving the material and grosser parts for the delectation of their worshippers. This is rather a comfortable sort of doctrine, as you can give to the gods that which is pleasing to them and provide yourself at the same time with the finest of feasts. It helps, too, to show that there exists in the Fijian mind a sharp demarcation between things spiritual and things corporeal. I came across a clear demonstration of this in an example, which also hinged closely on totemism. The people of Rewasau, one of the Mboubutho villages, were losing a lot of their number through some mysterious epidemic, and as usual they came to me about it. They said that a neighbouring clan, the Naiova, whose totem was a malignant little black snake called *Mbolo*, had the power of the evil eye and had overlooked them. Consequently their intestines were full of these little black snakes which were eating them up and causing death. I made a searching inquiry as to the symptoms, etc., of which I made copious notes. Seeing this the spokesman said to me, "And now, Sir, having asked all these questions, when the next death occurs you will send, I suppose, the District Medical Officer to cut the corpse up and look for the snakes. But he won't find any; they are not real snakes, only spiritual ones!"

It is rather a digression, but I may as well mention that I got at the root of the trouble without having recourse to the dissecting knife. I found that a communal pigsty had been built much too close to the spring which supplied the village with water. I had the swine removed and the sickness disappeared. I used to liken myself to Mr. Falcon, the first lieutenant of Peter Simple's first ship. "He always had a remedy for everything, and the ship's company used to call him 'Remedy Jack.'" I, too, had always to have a remedy of some sort or other up my sleeve.

Neglect of totem usages has been made the excuse for crime and wrongdoing. Opposite the village of Nasongo is a tall cliff of grey basalt, which rising to a height of some three hundred feet overlooks it. A man called Kasere, employed in carrying the overland mail

across Viti Levu, attempted to commit suicide by throwing himself from this precipice. He was caught by the boughs of the trees which fringe its base and was picked up there insensible by the people of Nasongo. None of his bones was broken, and after an illness of some three months he recovered completely. He was a married man, but had had a love affair with another girl, a single woman. They decided to commit suicide together, and selected strangling as the method. The girl effected her purpose, but Kasere said his life was too strong within him and he could not kill himself in that way. To carry out the compact honourably he had leaped from the cliff opposite Nasongo, but had been saved by the vegetation. I knew that he had a family of boys, and that he was therefore safe from the wrath of the ancestral spirits, and I asked him why he had taken up with another woman seeing that he was blessed with a fruitful wife. He replied in these terms : " Sir, you think me happy in that I have provided posterity, but what chance have I to rear those children ? They are constantly ill. I made a mistake in marrying a woman of a wrong totem. Her tribal animal is the snake. Now I and all my people eat serpents, our sacred symbol being the wild duck. Our children partake of their mother's nature, and when they eat of the same food as I do, or that which has been cooked in the same pots in which snakes have been boiled, they suffer from swollen faces, necks and glands. I therefore determined to take up with another woman who had not a like disability, but lo ! I am enmeshed in the net of the law."

We know that the Scottish highland clans have each their floral badges which they wear in their bonnets. The Camerons display the oak, the Campbells of Argyll the wild myrtle, the Macgregors the pine tree, etc. etc. The Wainimala clan (the Children of the Hills), which has the eel for its animal totem, has, like the Campbells, the wild myrtle for its floral badge. The Viti Levu highlanders regard these distinctive marks differently from the way in which the Scotch do. They do not sport sprigs or flowers of the plant as ornaments, but consider it as the tree emblematic of the life of the tribe, of which the individual members are the branches. The Nasongo people have the *moli* or wild shaddock for their tribal tree, and upon the birth of male children the ancestral gods were invoked that they might grow up true branches of the parent stem. The Noemalu, a most aristocratic clan, whose history I know more about than of the other hill communities, have the *mbua* (? *Fagraea berteriana*) as their distinctive plant. It is a beautiful shrub with ivory-tinted flowers which are very fragrant, and their appearance and



perfume very much resemble the gardenia. The leaves are thick and glossy, and when a child is born the lintels and doorposts of the house where it occurs are decorated with them, and also with the blooms, should they happen to be in season. It is one of the signs of spring, which in Tholo is called the *vula-i-mbua*, or the moon when the *mbua* comes into flower.

Before the spread of Christianity the appearance of the animate totem of a tribe was greeted by its members with the *tama*, the sacred shout of acclamation accorded to the ancestral god and to the head chief, his earthly shrine. Several of the hill clans have a species of osprey for their badge, which make their nests on high inaccessible crags and peaks. The native name for this bird is, when translated literally, "rock-duck." I have often seen them flying, but never came across a captive of the species, nor have I been very close to them. According to the people themselves the bird is short-set and squat, with legs in the same proportion to the body as a duck's, and with broad outspreading talons. He derives his name from frequenting and making his home on the rocky crags and ledges. He occasionally swoops down and carries off chickens, but the natives say that if he makes a false strike and comes down to the ground he does not attempt to rise again. They say that he then dies of a broken heart, his pride being so wounded at his lack of skill. It may be, that with such short legs in proportion to his body, he cannot rise from the earth, but has to have some elevated spot as a jumping-off place. An ornithologist could of course solve this. I only give the folklore tale of the bird.

On the Island of Ovalau, fifteen miles due east from Viti Levu, is Levuka, once the chief port of Fiji. Between it and the mainland is a deep channel across which in modern times has been laid a cable to keep the place in touch with Suva, the present capital. By sea and by land Levuka is quite fifty miles from the head waters of the Wainimala, but there is an allegory which shows that at a remote time, about that of the arrival of Ndeng-ei, there was communication between the two places. In later times the universal state of warfare cut off all intercourse, but the memory of the former state of affairs is recorded in the allegory just alluded to. It has a moral, too, which points out that murder and ingratitude do not go unpunished, and is set forth in the following story:



## THE STORY OF THE ANCESTRAL GODS OF NAMBORO, A WAINIMALA CLAN

My Lord the Black Lizard and My Lord the Hairy Lizard, the ancestral spirits of the Namboro tribe, were brothers, who in olden times dwelt on their own land at Siliandrau on the Wainimala, where the little stream Wainiyangu joins it.

One day they amused themselves by making canoes out of dalo stalks, and when the river became swollen with the rains they launched them. The flood carried off that of Hairy Lizard, and he drifted away, leaving his brother Black Lizard behind.

Hairy Lizard was the younger brother, and he was washed away down the river past its mouth at the sea and at last he fetched up at Levuka on the Island of Ovalau. There he met My Lord the Osprey, the god of the place. Hairy Lizard made obeisance to him, saying, "Noble grandfather, spare my life."

The Osprey replied, "Your life is granted; am I not your grandfather! I willed that you should drift to these shores that we might dwell together."

So they lived together, and after six days a great feast was made at which Hairy Lizard proffered this prayer, "Sir Osprey, be gracious and allow me to return to the Wainimala and to my brother."

His host replied, "It is far to your home, but I will carry you there. Climb on to my back and we will start off at once." Away he flew, and entering the great Rewa River at its mouth he followed its course inland. By the sweep of his wings he cleft the hills on either side, creating those large alluvial flats which skirt the river's banks. Thus were made those broad and noble lands at Naitasiri. When they got there, said the Osprey, "Grandson, do you know where you are?"

"Oh!" replied Hairy Lizard, "my home is yet far away."

On they flew up the river, the cleaving of the wings making flat land on either bank. Where the wings did not reach the hills remained. Then they came to where the Wainimala and the Wailoa meet at Undu, and again said the Osprey, "Grandson, do you know where you are?"

Then answered Hairy Lizard, "We are quite near now, grandfather." Then they saw Siliandrau, where dwelt Black Lizard, the other brother. Then they rested for seven days.

After which the elder brother, Black Lizard, said, "Oh! little brother, Hairy Lizard, let us kill Sir Osprey and eat him."

But the younger one said, "No! he spared my life and brought me home. If you hurt him I can no longer live with you."

But the elder persisted and was importunate. When night fell and the Osprey went to sleep, Black Lizard took sinnet plaited from the fibre of the coco-nut and with it netted up the doorways of the house. Then he set fire to it. Sir Osprey, startled from sleep, found the place burning from which he could not escape, as all egress was obstructed. Then said he, "Grandsons, what is this? Spare my life, and I will make your village as renowned as the Dwelling of the Snake (the shrine of Ndeng-ei). Yours, too, shall be the land upwards from here to the source of the Wainimala, and from its founts shall you drink."

They were obdurate, and as the fire grew closer the Osprey went on: "Behold, I am about to die and I tell you this. Let me live and I will make you the great chiefs of the Wainimala, and all the people of it subject to you. If you refuse, I say that not one of the tribe of Namboro shall in future be a chief, and you shall hereafter serve strange masters, and no longer shall drink from the founts of the Wainimala. I die in your village, and you have not done to me as I did unto you when I succoured you in your sore distress at Levuka, when the sea cast you up."

So died My Lord the Osprey. Hairy Lizard left his brother, Black Lizard, and ever since the clan of Namboro has been masterless and landless. It was invaded and conquered by others, whom it had to serve.

Under British rule the people of Namboro were got together again and placed on their own ancestral lands. When I first knew them they were living in a pretty little village called Sawanikula, towards the head of the Wainimala, whose clear waters flowing over its pebbly bed filled the air with music. It was a most delightful spot embowered in a grove of fruit trees, and gay with scarlet dracænæ and many-hued amaranths and crotons. Their land is fertile, and the streams abound with fish, prawns and eels, and one would think that life there would be well worth living. But no! the curse still lingered and the people applied to me for leave to abandon the place. The women were troubled in their sleep by an evil spirit, a *tevoro*, and they refused to remain there. Man is generally supposed to be the lord of creation in native life, but I found that the other sex had to be reckoned with very seriously, and as in this instance they had quite made up their minds about it, they had their own way, and left Sawanikula.

## CHAPTER XI

### Vunindawa

**Q**UITE a detour has been made since we left the Resident Commissioner at Nandurulolo, his Rewa residence. It was done in an endeavour to give some sort of an idea of what the Tholo or hill folk were like. Thirty-six long miles up stream intervene between Nandurulolo and Nakorovatu, which, in the days being written about, was the Government Station of the Tholo East Province. There were no made roads, the countryside was a dense mass of jungle, and the river was the highway. To Viria, eighteen miles further up, just above where the Wai-indira flows into the Rewa, the stream is navigable for light draft steamers and sailing craft. From thence fifteen miles further on, to Taivou, at the junction of the Wainimbuka and the Wainimala, the journey was usually continued in boats, or preferably in *takia* or river canoes. The former could be employed, but it meant much heavy labour in haulage over the rapids and shallows. Deoka, whither the boats of H.M.S. *Challenger* penetrated, is about two miles below the confluence of the rivers just mentioned. Nowadays modern science has come to the rescue, and very light-draft motor boats ply daily between Nandurulolo and Taivou, in which the voyage can be made in a few hours. In my time it took up the whole day, allowing for the midday halt to rest the men and cook their food.

Nakorovatu by river is three miles above Taivou, on the left bank of the Wainimala. Travellers generally landed at the latter place, as there was a good road on to Nakorovatu, a mile shorter than the waterway, and by using it the increasing strength of the river's current could be avoided. This path was a level, grassy causeway, with hedges of gay-leaved crotons on either side, which had been made under Mr. Carew's directions. After the long cramped-up journey on the canoe it was pleasant indeed to be able to get out and stretch one's legs.

My official conveyance was a long outrigger canoe about forty-five feet in length, which carried a crew of six or eight, who poled her

in the shallows, as is done in punts on our English rivers, and used paddles in the deep reaches. For my accommodation there was a platform amidships, about eight feet long and three broad, which I had to share with my baggage. It was matted and covered in by a small thatched house, under which I could lie down, sleep and while time away by reading. Whenever we felt inclined we could haul up alongside the bank, light a fire, boil water for tea and cook food. It was hard work for the men when making the upward journey and made them very weary. Fijians always have a nickname ready, and my canoe was called the *Vuramothé*, which means "bringer of sleep," as the men averred she made them dog-tired. The life of the official or provincial *takia*, as the people styled her, was about three years. Whenever a new one was commissioned it was always given the old sobriquet, *Vuramothé*. It was a sly way of poking fun at the official superior, and of bringing to his notice and pity the sad lot of his poor hard-worked canoe men.

It was in June, 1884, that I made my first long voyage to the Wainimala for duty in Tholo East. Sir William Des Vœux, the Governor, was away in Sydney, and Mr. Thurston (afterwards Sir John Thurston) was administering the Colony in his stead. The Acting Colonial Secretary was Dr. Macgregor, who subsequently became so well known as Sir William Macgregor, and who was at various times Governor of British New Guinea, Lagos, Newfoundland and finally of Queensland, where he had so large a part in the founding of the University. It was to him that I owed my introduction to the Colonial Service. I had been a coffee planter, and Mr. Thurston desired that the hill people should be instructed in the cultivation of that particular crop, in furtherance of his Native Taxation Scheme. He therefore approved of Dr. Macgregor's nomination of myself, and I was sent to Tholo East as an Inspector of Native Taxes. I had previously applied to Sir William Des Vœux for one of the Stipendiary Magistracies of the Colony, and when he returned he appointed me in that capacity to the Province of Mbua, on the island of Vanua Levu. But I never went, as Mr. Carew was good enough to say that he had found me useful in Tholo East, and that he desired somebody with magisterial powers to assist him in the administration of the province. In October, therefore, I was gazetted Stipendiary Magistrate and Assistant to the Resident Commissioner of Tholo East.

Sir William Des Vœux left us shortly afterwards to go as Governor to Newfoundland, and afterwards to Hong Kong. There is a very interesting account of his sojourn in Fiji in his book, *My Colonial*

*Service.* It was during his time that King George visited Fiji, when he and his brother Prince Edward were midshipmen on H.M.S. *Bacchante*. Sir William was always very good and kind to me, and Lady Des Vœux's reign at Government House is held in pleasant remembrance by all old colonists.

Many of my contemporaries, who were young members of the Fijian Service then, have since greatly distinguished themselves in many parts of the world: Sir George Le Hunte, who was until recently Governor of Trinidad; Sir Fielding Clark, our Chief Justice, who finished up in the same capacity in Jamaica; Sir Alfred Sharpe, so well known in Central and East Africa; Sir Wilfrid Collet, now Governor of British Guiana, and Sir William Allardyce in Tasmania; Sir Francis Fuller, until recently Chief Commissioner in Ashanti; Sir Basil Thomson, the Head of the C.I.D. at Scotland Yard, and Sir Edward Wallington, of the King's Household. They all of them graduated in Fiji, and the colonists recall with pride that their careers started in our pleasant isles.

Alfred Marriott, a young officer of the Native Department, represented the Resident Commissioner upon my arrival in Tholo East. He had no judicial functions, having merely to receive letters and reports from the different districts, and keep the head of the province *au courant* generally in what was going on. He was young, gay and irresponsible then, a very pleasant companion who spent most of his time in fishing and shooting. That was before the days of the accursed mongoose, and small game such as duck, plover and pigeon were plentiful. Added to his skill as a sportsman he was an excellent cook, and the very best clear turtle soup I ever had was made by him. That was after he left the Wainimala and had returned to Suva and the Native Department. It was a Christmas Day, and, in addition to the other parts of the feast, he turned out a most excellent plum pudding. He has now settled down into a landed country gentleman in England after a mission to Persia, where he had, I believe, a great deal to do with the oil negotiations.

As representative of the Resident Commissioner, Marriott occupied the official quarters at Nakorovatu. It was a large *Mbure* or tribal hall on the edge of the *rara* or village green, and was a fine specimen of native architecture. As mine was a new appointment, I had no place to go to and had to shift for myself. Marriott was good, and put me up until I could get some houses built. I had a delightfully airy letter from the Colonial Secretary saying that a new post had been created for me and fixing my pay, but there was not a word as to how I was to be lodged, or how I was to travel about



the very extensive district which had been assigned to me. I was just shot out in the wilderness to make my own way. However, I had then been nearly fourteen years in the Colony, and understood the art of settling down. I pitched upon a delightful little plateau overlooking the Wainimala, a few chains above Nakorovatu, called Vunindawa, which subsequently became the headquarters of the province when Marriott returned to Suva and I became the Stipendiary Magistrate and Assistant to the Commissioner.

Lord Harcourt, when Colonial Secretary and presiding at one of the Corona Club or Crown Colony dinners, dubbed the smaller and more impecunious of the dependencies as his Cinderellas. Fiji is no longer in that category, but at the time of which I am writing she was, if I may coin a word, one of the Cinderellaist of the lot. I knew it was no use asking for money, so I took the bull by the horns and constructed my compound at my own expense. Fortunately, it did not cost much to build Fijian houses, nevertheless I had to spend £50. I also had to pay my canoe men out of my own pocket.

One of these was Anaiyasa, which was his Biblical or baptismal name. In English we should call him Ananias, which perhaps might be considered undesirable, but it is quite a favourite name with Fijians, probably from its pleasant and liquid sound. Euphony has a good deal to answer for, and one of the Wesleyan ministers told me that one day when he was baptising some converts a girl demanded that she should be called Golgotha. Those were the early days when adults after conversion presented themselves for baptism and chose their own names. The missionary said that he had quite a long argument about her selection, in which she persisted, as she thought it sounded nicely.

Anaiyasa attached himself to me for the rest of my service. I regret to say, though, that a considerable portion of his time was spent within the walls of the Provincial Jail. In our simple life in the hills that carried no stigma, as I hope presently to explain. As he himself would say, *veitalia*, i.e. never mind, or, as our Tommies would put it, *sany-fary-hang*, or *nimport*. He was much given to flirtations, the penalty for which under the old native law was death, as it was in ancient Japan in the days of the great Pooh-bah and Koko. Anaiyasa would serve his sentence cheerfully and go home, then should any great function approach, such as a visit of the Governor or a tour of the province by the Commissioner, he would duly turn up to bear a hand. He made most excellent curries from the ducks and pigeons shot en route, and was always smiling and willing. When the Commissioner went on one of his rounds I always had to



go and carry on the court and magisterial work on the Rewa at Nandurulolo. On such occasions Anaiyasa would attach himself to the Commissioner's entourage, and would help himself to anything he thought might be useful from my belongings. Carew generally travelled very roughly without any regard for the conveniences, but when Anaiyasa took him under his wing he found, rather to his astonishment, that daily his boots were cleaned and polished. Upon inquiring as to how it was done, Anaiyasa airily replied, "When I and the Stipendiary Magistrate, your Honour's Assistant, go on circuit, we always take our blacking and brushes!" He was a bit over-zealous, though. Subsequently, when I administered both Tholo North and Tholo East, with my residence at Nandarivatu, upon my visits to the old province I generally found Anaiyasa waiting for me with many little matters which added to my comfort. At first I felt grateful until the local Hindu storekeeper waited upon me with a long bill run up in my name, and I found, to use a native proverb, that Anaiyasa had been carrying my authority upon his shoulders. It was no use getting angry: it was done with a good intention and to make things easy for me, and Anaiyasa was always so pleasant and plausible. Before I left Fiji he had begun to age a bit and his hair to be tinged with grey. He was trying to leave wild oats alone and to range himself, and had married an elderly widow with a ready-made family, the relict of the Chief Constable of his district. I have a photograph of him with Mr. Carew and his fox terrier, which was the Resident Commissioner's inseparable companion and the most important member of his household. They are all sitting on a *takia* at Naindirindiri, the head of canoe navigation on the Wainimala. It is from a photograph taken by Sir John Thurston during a tour through the hill country. Drawn up under the bank is the *Vuramothé*, with Lady Thuiston and the private secretaries on board.

Vunindawa, where I pitched my camp, is a most lovely and picturesque spot. It takes its name from a clump of *ndawa* trees, as big as large elms, on the edge of the bank overlooking the Wainimala. The fruit of the *ndawa* (*Nephelium pinnata*) is something like our sweet chestnut in appearance. It is about the same size and covered with a thin green shell. When this is rubbed off a white substance like a bit of stiff jelly is found with a stone in the centre. The Fijians consider it a great delicacy, and it is really very nice. As a rule, the tree does not bear so well inland as it does on the coast, and the natives say that to enjoy it properly the fruit should be dipped in sea-water to give it a zest, and to wash away the thin

parchment-like under-skin. Our trees bore very well, usually in January and February. In the cool months the leaves went rosy red, adding pleasant splashes of colour to the landscape.

Below this clump of *ndawa* was the Wainimala sprawling over beds of shingle, like the rivers in the Scotch highlands. In the still nights I could hear the water singing as it fought its way over the pebbles and stones with sweet and pleasant music. Inland were grassy lawns which we turned into our *rara* or village green, round which were grouped the court-house, police quarters, jail, and houses for the married men. On a knoll overlooking them was my residence facing west, with a broad wedge of fertile country between the Wainimala and the Wai-indina in the foreground, backed by high volcanic cliffs rising to a height of some two thousand feet. On top of them is a belt of forest, from which emerges a considerable stream which tumbles over the grey precipice in two silver streaks, called Wairuarua, or the two waters. Looking southward, I could see down to Taivou, where the Wainimbuka and the Wainimala meet; whilst northward were the winding reaches of the latter river as she made her way from her source at Tomanivei, the mother of the waters.

Tholo East, or Wainimala, was a solely-native province, as there were only two whites in it, who in partnership kept a small trading station at the junction of the Wainimbuka and the Wainimala. Not long after I settled down at Vunindawa they dissolved partnership and one of them went elsewhere. Not far from where they lived, on the other side of the Wainimala on its right bank, was a coffee plantation owned by the Ansdell Brothers, sons of the celebrated R.A., the great painter of dogs and sporting scenes. It was, however, in the Naitasiri Province, where its borders touch Tholo East. The Ansdells left also soon after I arrived inland, but whilst they remained they were good and pleasant neighbours with whom I generally spent my week-ends. They were great fishermen, and Saturdays were generally devoted to the gentle craft. Our Fijian rivers abound with splendid fish which take freely our ordinary English flies and spinning bait. In places where butchers' shops are an unknown quantity they and the ducks and pigeons which fell to our guns formed a most welcome addition to our larders. We used to start away in my canoe trolling with minnows and spoons, and shooting ducks as we went along. When I first went up there were three brothers, the eldest of whom, Robert, was married. I have already mentioned the kindness of Mrs. Ansdell in nursing the boy whose thigh was lacerated by a shark whilst swimming down the Wainimala, and whose relatives demanded wages for the time he was being looked after. Before my

house at Vunindawa had got properly dried, and before there were any doors or shutters with which to keep out the river fog, which in the cool season is very thick and penetrating, I slept in it. The result was a sharp attack of fever, of what sort I do not know, as in those days there was no malaria in Fiji. The Ansdells took possession of me and brought me down to their place, where I was most kindly nursed, and I always remember their goodness with the greatest gratitude. But alas! they did not remain long, as coffee planting proved not to be remunerative, and one by one they drifted away. They were very musical, and with their piano and clarionets we used to have great concerts.

It was always a question of speculation to our superiors as to how their district officers would stand the solitude of isolated posts such as mine. My mother, who was living in Fiji, prophesied that I should console myself by making gardens, a pastime which had previously carried me through the loneliness of previous life as a coffee planter, whilst a friend predicted that I should be captivated by the romance of the work inland amongst the interesting people of our Fijian highlands. Both proved to be right.

Vunindawa lent itself wholeheartedly to gardening, and I soon had it ablaze with gorgeous variegated crotons, scarlet dracænæ and many-hued varieties of the coleus, which flourish exceedingly, seeding perpetually and producing quantities of new hybrids. I also managed to grow many roses and other English flowers. Heliotrope spread itself about in great wheels, which was much admired by my visitors. I planted, too, several kinds of palms and tropical fruits, such as mangoes, oranges, guavas, rose apples and many other varieties, and there were always quantities of bananas and pineapples. The little grassy hill on which my house stood was studded with tall fern trees and the king plantain, which is so called by the natives because the fruit is born in its very crown and points upwards. Other varieties of bananas and plantains droop downwards, so the Fijians say that the *sauanga* or brave chief, as the name implies, which holds its head erect, is lord and chief of them all. It grows very tall with magnificent long and broad silky leaves, and it makes a splendid addition to the foliage of a garden. The fruit itself is of pale green appearance and tastes like insipid jelly, and is of no use for the table. However, when mine came into bearing my Fijian neighbours, according to the custom of *kerekere* or begging, after the native manner, used to come and ask me for the fruit. This I always refused, as I reserved it for the delightful little humming birds and small finches, to which it afforded a real treat and much enjoyment. It was a great pleasure

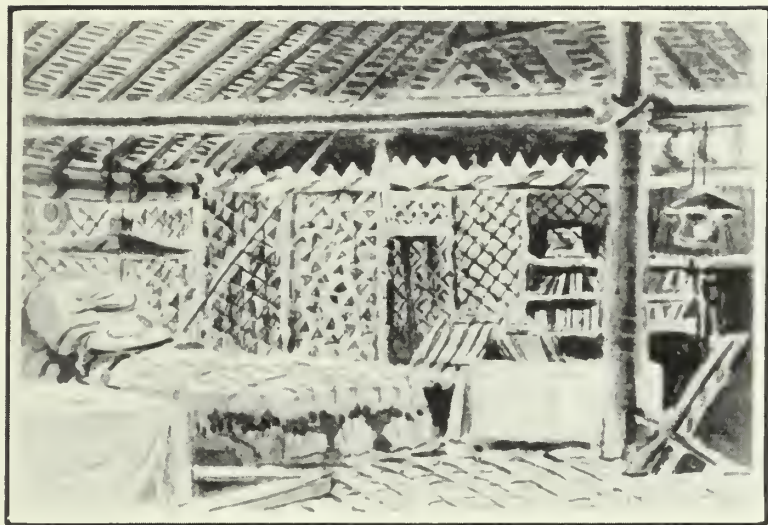
to watch these beautiful little creatures as they darted in and out of the broad, glossy leaves and enlivened the stillness by their subdued twitterings. If my native friends desired the *sauanga* fruit so much, they had only to search the bush, as it is a wild and indigenous plant. But as I did not eat those in front of my house they thought they might as well ask for them, and they did not understand why they should be kept for the birds.

Besides the ornamental gardening we had to have cultivations in which to grow food for the police and prisoners. The Government allowed nothing for rations, and so we were compelled to provide them for ourselves. However, the Fijians are skilful agriculturists, and the strong-armed constables and inmates of the Provincial Jail raised the crops necessary to sustain themselves with yams, *dalo*, an edible arum, bananas and other native provisions. On the whole, the people are vegetarians, and, with what the river supplied—fish, prawns, eels and fresh-water mussels—we contrived to carry on without outside assistance. It was a self-reliant and independent existence.

When I was duly installed as Assistant to the Commissioner, and Alfred Marriott resumed his duties in the Native Office, the *Mbure*, the official quarters, at Nakorovatu reverted to me. The *Mbuli*, who resided there and was chief of the district of Matailombau, did not particularly care for the presence of the Government in his village, nor did his people. He also wanted the *Mbure* for a tribal hall, as it was situated on the edge of the village green. I did not want to be cramped in a place where I could have no garden, and would be hampered in the keeping of poultry. The native police, who were recruited from all over the province, had no proper planting grounds, and they, too, wanted to be free from the restrictions of a native community not their own. The *Mbuli* and I conferred together, and we arranged that I should relinquish all claim to the *Mbure*, and that in return he should build me a house at Vunindawa.

Native buildings are constructed with reed walls, bamboo rafters, and on the weather side of the island are thatched with sugar-cane leaves, which make a most excellent roof. On the dry side, where the wild canes do not flourish from the lack of moisture, grass is used instead. It does not make nearly such a neat cover and is not water-tight. Fijians, when they try, turn out very pretty houses admirably suited to the climate, as the materials used are non-conductors of heat, and consequently the interiors are cool and pleasant. They are pleasing, too, to the eye, as the reed sides are woven together like basket work, and worked into arabesques by means of black string





INTERIOR OF MY HOUSE AT VUNINDAWA.

Built by the Matailombau people. There was not a single nail in it, and all the material used was of native manufacture, the walls being hung with *masi*, or bark cloth.

*Pen and Ink Sketch by Colonel Radford, C.B., C.I.E.*



SUNDAY AT NANDARIVATU.

Returning from Church. Left to right, Lieutenant Ratu Veli, myself and the regimental mascot, my wife's mastiff, Leo, and Lieutenant Herbert Heniker-Heaton.





procured from wild jungle fibres. The walls are divided off into panels by laths cut from the stems of the tree ferns, which are also black. As the reed work in between is white, the general effect is black and white, like the exteriors of our old English houses. The flooring of my quarters was made of split bamboos plaited into squares, and the doors and window shutters were made of the same material. In my first house there were no European fittings at all. I had a few tables and chairs, but many of the cupboards and shelves were made of reeds and bamboos, in the making of which my native sergeant was very skilful. The partitions between the rooms were similarly constructed, and were overlaid with painted native cloth in order to secure a certain amount of privacy. That was difficult to obtain, owing to the flimsiness of the material used. The general effect, however, was pleasant, and when I was honoured by lady visitors the first thing they usually said after crossing the threshold was, "Oh! what a pretty house!"

The new quarters were sixty feet long, or in Fijian parlance ten fathoms. A fathom is nominally six feet according to our measurements, but with the natives it is as much as a man can stretch with arms extended, from the tips of the fingers on the one hand to the tips of the other. The fathom and the span are the only standards of length.

When the time came to build the *Mbuli* sent his *matanivanua*, otherwise his herald, talking-man or general factotum, to me, so that we might lay out the house together. The first thing done was to fashion a rod, which I saw was made equal to six feet. Then the *matanivanua* laid out the house with this and apportioned so many fathoms each to various villages, and sent his messengers thither to proclaim that building would start on a certain day. In the meantime the people to whom these parts had been assigned would cut the posts required, prepare the reeds and get the string ready wherewith to fasten the material together. Not a nail is used in Fijian building; everything is tied.

At the appointed time the people duly turned up with their quota, which they brought in rafts by the river, so that all they had to do then was to carry up from the landing-place the requisites for the house. When Fijians build for each other they are not paid in money, but are sumptuously feasted during the time they are at work. As I was getting this house in exchange for the *Mbure* at Nakorovatu, which was reverting to the *Mbuli*, he had to provide the food. But the expense did not fall upon him. Those villages which were not participating in the erection of the house furnished the *mang-iti*,

as the customary feasts are called. They are of course the usual huge baskets of yams and other cooked vegetables with Mr. Pig roasted whole on top. Such was the simple and patriarchal method of carrying out a communal undertaking, and very effective and useful it was. With everything so prearranged my house went up like magic and was completed in about three days. The meeting together and the prospects of roast pork and yams and plenty of *yangona* makes everyone very lighthearted and merry. The young and active members yell and shout and work with feverish activity whilst the elders look on and applaud. Many jokes are made and witticisms exchanged, and fun and jollity are the order of the day. Such was the ancient custom in my days, but the old order is passing, and education after our fashion is supplanting the old methods and substituting ours instead.

## CHAPTER XII

### The Police at Vunindawa

WHEN Tholo East came under my care there were four distinct bodies of police in Fiji—the Armed Native Constabulary, which for the sake of brevity we called the A.N.C., the civil or town police, and the rural and village constables. The A.N.C. headed the list, being to all intents and purposes the regular force of the Colony. It was the successor of the Native Infantry Regiment of King Thakombau's time. When Sir Arthur Gordon, as the first British Governor, took over His Majesty's Administration it was still necessary to have a backing of armed force. To avoid any semblance of military domination he changed the title of the old regiment and called it the A.N.C. As it acted as His Excellency's bodyguard, it was better clothed than the civil police, having gold buttons instead of silver, and for the first ten or twelve years of its existence was commanded by the A.D.C.'s of the various Governors; the Fijians continued to regard it as their army. Under the old regime they styled the commissioned officers *Turang-a-ni-valu*, the literal translation of which is "Chiefs of War" and the rank and file *Sotia*, their way of rendering soldier, and they adhered to these old titles after the new formation. The corps provided the guards of honour for all ceremonials, and one of its principal functions was to provide firing parties at the funerals of great native chiefs, to give them "the three rounds blank." Everything is celebrated in verse by the native poets, and, sad to say, when a party of the A.N.C. went over to bury the old Lord of Kandavu, he who made ducks and drakes of the sovereigns found in a captured trading brig, one of the *sotia* fired out of time and it was duly recorded in the *lele* or dirge composed for the occasion. It was seized upon as an opportunity to lighten with a little humour an otherwise tale of woe. The A.N.C., too, generally had some bards in the ranks, and here is a specimen of one of their *meke* or songs :

"I clean my rifle every day and at Government House mount guard,  
I watch all night until the dawn, oh! the work indeed is hard."

After the A.N.C. came the ordinary civil police employed in the towns. It constituted a separate department under officers of its own, the head of whom was the Superintendent. For the peace of the country districts there was the rural police who served with the various Commissioners and Stipendiary Magistrates. Finally, there were village constables, whose sole duty was to keep order in the purely native communities. The members of these various bodies of police were called *ovisa* in contradistinction to the *sotia* or soldiers, the rank and file of the A.N.C. The designation *ovisa* is derived from the Bible, being taken from that verse where a man is recommended to agree with his adversary whilst in the way lest he be haled before the judge and by him be delivered over to the officer, etc. The earliest form of law and order was introduced by the Wesleyan missionaries, and they drew upon Holy Writ for their terminology.

All these services were kept going by a method akin to conscription. Each district was called upon to furnish certain numbers of recruits, who were nominated by the *Mbuli* or head men. The term for the A.N.C. and the civil police was three years, whilst one year sufficed for the rural and village constables. Men could re-enlist, if they so desired, and many spent the best years of their life with their respective corps. Young chiefs of the highest rank served as privates in the A.N.C. and as ordinary constables in the police. It was considered quite the right thing to do, and such was the constitution of native society that a man so serving would be treated with the respect due to his station in life, and could live *en camaraderie* with those beneath him without derogation. It fitted in with the feudal system of old Fiji, and kept the ranks full of first-rate men.

In 1905 an Ordinance was passed amalgamating the Armed Native Constabulary with the civil and rural police under the title of the Fiji Constabulary, which was to be filled by voluntary enlistment. To effect this the old rates of pay were trebled, which immediately attracted sufficient recruits, but a good deal of riffraff found its way into the ranks. This new creation being only police, silver buttons and badges replaced the gold of the old A.N.C., and the new corps never seemed to me as smart as the one it superseded.

Upon my taking over Tholo East the police consisted of six rural constables and a sergeant. The latter was a younger member of the Noemalu clan, whose name was Naikasau. He was with me for fourteen years until he died in 1898 from influenza whilst out with a road gang. We were occupied for some time in making the new station at Vunindawa, but when we had got settled down fairly we



started to get some bridle tracks cut inland. I had a Ceylon road tracer and laid out the gradients. Naikasau followed with a gang of prisoners and did the cutting and making, and between us we pretty well opened up the province. He earned such a reputation at it that the people, with their usual predilection for nicknames, dubbed him "The Hewer of Earth" which was regarded afterwards as rather a title of honour. As our tracks were just dirt paths cut along the steep hill-sides it fitted in very well. I expect that I did not escape the usual custom, and I think I overheard one day a reference to myself as "The Roller of the Road." It had nothing to do with our implement of that name with which the Fijians of those days were unacquainted. It was meant to apply to the huge rollers at the big sugar mills which crush the canes to pulp. To the native mind they seemed the acme of power and force, and they complimented me as the driving will which compelled the construction of the roads.

Naikasau was a sincere and consistent Christian, and as steady as a rock in whatever was entrusted to him. A day or two before he died he asked me if I had ever known him do anything wrong, and I was able to say from the bottom of my heart, *never*. If ever a man fought the good fight he did, and like the immortal Gungadin, "'E was white, clear white, inside." He was once lured into a slight indiscretion, which, however, only tended to show up the poetic side of his nature. He gave his whole mind to duty and self-abnegation, and as a safeguard against temptation got married when he entered the service. The girl he took was his probably by tribal arrangement, a match made by his and her parents at their respective births in accordance with ancient custom. It was most unfortunate for Naikasau, as she proved to be a virago and a shrew. In other respects there was nothing against her and she was untouched by the breath of scandal. But she was neither pretty nor pleasant-mannered, and lived in an atmosphere of continual bad temper, and hampered her husband at a most critical moment by one of her tantrums. It was in 1887 when Sir Charles Mitchell, who was our Governor then, paid an official visit to Tholo East. He came attended by his private secretary, the Honourable Rupert Carrington, brother of the Marquis of Lincolnshire, who was then, as Earl Carrington, Governor of New South Wales. He had with him also his A.D.C., Lieutenant Malan, R.N., and Mr. Carew, the Resident Commissioner of Tholo East. Naturally at such a time the rural police had their hands very full, but the sergeant's wife chose the moment for a violent flare up, and decamped, leaving the baby behind for her unhappy husband to look after. As the Resident Commissioner had come up with His Excel-

lency, the duty at Nandurulolo on the Lower Rewa fell to my lot, and so I was not present when this *émeute* took place, but Carew told me about it and what an embarrassment it caused.

The indiscretion alluded to was a flirtation with another lady, which was really forced upon Naikasau. My functions were most extensive and I was sought after for many and varied reasons, some of which were calculated to make a man's hair stand on end. A lady of high rank of the Noemalu, Sergeant Naikasau's own clan, thought that her relatives were about to force her into a distasteful marriage, so she came to Vunindawa to seek my intervention. As a matter of course, in consonance with native ideas of hospitality, she put up with her kinsman Naikasau, with whom she started a violent flirtation, under the idea that he had influence with me. She said, "You get the Magistrate to help you divorce that wretched wife of yours, and then you and I can get married." She was young, pretty and an arrant coquette, and caused Naikasau to lose his head for a while. Since the introduction of education it has become quite the custom for young Fijians to propose in writing, and Naikasau sent Andi Kelera (Lady Clara) as the damsel was called, a letter in which he said, "Oh, Kelera, your words have sunk into and filled my heart, driving all else out, like as a boulder detached from the mountain-side rolls down to the valley below and bounding into a pool splashes out every drop of water. Now I can only think of you. If you do indeed love me wear the handkerchief I send with this, at the service to-morrow morning in the Church." Sad to say the next thing which happened was that the fickle Kelera brought the letter and the pretty little silk handkerchief enclosed within, and handed it to me with a demure smirk. Thus did she give her lover away, but it was ever so with Fijian women. The teaching of generations that flirtations partook of the nature of deadly sin, and that concealment of them brought on sickness and death, had sunk into their minds and become an hereditary trait, or perhaps one might say, "taint."

Before I had been very long at Vunindawa I received a letter from a Wesleyan teacher at Mbuethandra, a little village just above the junction of the Wainimala and the Wailoa. He wrote to say that a chief called Nathola-uli had come over from Nandrau, in West Tholo, and had taken possession of Mbuethandra, and was slaughtering the pigs and poultry, and that the villagers had in consequence all fled. He ended up by saying, "It seems, Sir, as if he is waging a war on us."

The scene of action was about twenty-five miles up stream; it was the wet season and the rivers much swollen. Nevertheless, it

seemed necessary to make an effort to get up there, so myself, the sergeant and a couple of constables started off. It was a small enough party if matters should turn out to be so bad as they were represented. However, we relied upon turning out the village police as we went along, who formed, in fact, the *posse comitatus*. They responded to the call, and by the time we reached the scene of operations I had a tail of about thirty strapping fellows, but our only arms were stout walking sticks or staves. As far as I can remember, it is now thirty-seven years since the event, we went a short part of the way by canoe, but afterwards as our numbers increased we had to proceed on foot. We marched up the shingle beds bordering the river, having every now and then to make a ford as the beds shifted from side to side. It rained steadily all the time and gradually the river rose higher and higher. At the last crossing just before we reached our destination the water was up to our necks and running strongly. The sergeant, Naikasau, ranged himself on one side of me and a stalwart village constable on the other, and shoulder to shoulder we effected the ford and dripping wet found ourselves at Mbuethandra, which apparently had been completely deserted by the inhabitants. But from a house we saw thick wreaths of smoke coming through the thatch and heard voices inside. I dived through one door and the sergeant through another. The walls of the house were low and the two doors very small, and with the smoke with which it was filled, there was not much light. The pungent acrid wood-smoke made my eyes smart and nearly blinded me. When I could see I found the sergeant had collared Nathola-uli and had got him handcuffed. The two were of course, hill fashion, related in some mysterious manner, and the sergeant was reassuring his elder brother, as he called his prisoner, that he would have to come on a visit with us to Vunindawa, where he might be assured he would be kindly treated. Besides our captive there were a few old men who through infirmity had not been able to flee when the others had. I quite thought from the teacher's letter that Nathola-uli had a considerable following; he was, however, alone but mad. His rank and insanity had frightened the villagers, so they ran and relied upon me to put matters right.

As soon as the excitement of the arrest was over Nathola-uli recovered the usual urbanity of a Fijian chief and said he was delighted to see me, and in fact was on his way to visit me at Vunindawa and pay his respects. Seeing that it was so wet he asked me to stay the night and that he would have a pig killed for us. As the animals in the village were not his, I had to temporise, and told him that we must really get a bit further down the river before nightfall,

and that as there were many affairs that we had to discuss together I asked him to come on with me to Vunindawa.

Nabuethandra is up the Wailoa about three miles above where it joins the Wainimala. At the meeting of these streams is a village called Undu, which is quite a strategic point, as it is the key to the extensive valleys of the two rivers, and it will often be mentioned again in the course of this narrative. It was in those days a big and important place. There we found the people gathered together awaiting our return, and with them were those who had fled from Nathola-uli. As he was a high chief and related more or less to them it was considered the proper thing to sham a little regret, and the women wept and mourned for him. He answered this by prancing and capering about the village square, yelling out that he was a steam engine and required pigs, fowls and sugar-cane with which to keep up steam. Similar scenes were enacted at each village until we reached Nakorosuli, about half-way on our return journey. There we put up for the night, and according to the custom of the land we all slept in the big, comfortable and well-matted house of the chief of the village. I was deadly tired from the long march and the constant fording of the streams, and soon fell into a deep sleep. I woke with a start some time during the night and with the feeling that something was wrong. I found Nathola-uli on his knees beside me, bending over my body and telling me not to make a noise as he wished to say something confidential, which he did not want the others to hear. "My Lord of Decision" (a term applied to judges and magistrates, as they decide cases), said he, "they are a bad lot up at Mbuethandra; let us deport the whole of them and you and I will divide their lands between us."

Nathola-uli was a strong powerful man, and knowing his madness I did not feel at all comfortable. "Nathola-uli," said I, "I am so tired from the strenuous journey caused by my desire to see you; be of a good mind (*yalo vinaka*), let me sleep now and we will talk the affair over when we get down to Vunindawa." That was quite enough, I had appealed to his sense of gentlemanly behaviour; he left me and we all slept through till morning.

We were on the most friendly terms for the few days we were together at Vunindawa, although there was a good deal of trouble with him. He observed that I had not a plantain garden and started to make one, stealing the plants from neighbouring native cultivations. Some of the young people jeered at him, and one day I saw two girls rush past my house with Nathola-uli in hot chase, and as he could not catch them up he flung a long clearing-knife after them.



To get a man committed to a lunatic asylum is a long, difficult and complicated process. It took a certain amount of diplomacy to get it done without hurting Nathola-uli's feeling and invoking a display of violence. When I had complied with the necessary formalities and drawn up the warrant of commitment I told Nathola-uli that I was going to send him down to Suva in order that he might get the Governor to decide the matters we had been discussing at Vunindawa. The sergeant, Naikasau, was a chief and a relative of our charge, so they went off together quite happily.

It is one thing to sign a warrant committing a man to an asylum, but it is quite another thing to get him admitted, as his insanity has to be certified by a medical man. There was no such person in Tholo East and Nathola-uli had to be examined by the medical officer of the jail and asylum upon his arrival at Suva. That gentleman refused to pronounce him insane, and the question then arose as to what was to be done with him. Fortunately Mr. Thurston was in charge then, as Administrator during one of the absences of the Governor, and he was a man who understood affairs. He directed that Nathola-uli should be sent back to Tholo West, his proper province, and that the Resident Commissioner at Fort Carnarvon should for a while keep him under observation there. This was done, and he remained under surveillance for a year or two and then returned to his home at Nandrau. But his malady broke out again in a virulent form from which he was only released by death.

It was always very difficult to deal with lunatics owing to the reluctance of the doctors to certify them as mad. I knew of a case in which a brother magistrate committed one to the asylum at Suva. The medical officer declined to sign the warrant and the man was let go. The next day he ran amuck in the highway and killed a harmless passer-by.

Naikasau, the sergeant, was the only one of the rural constables in Tholo East who stuck by me. The others were mostly young men who did their year's service and then went home. They were always nice boys, who looked after me very well. When I commenced road-making a great deal of my time was spent in camp out in the bush, and I usually took a couple of the constables as escort. I generally offered to let them go into the nearest villages for the weekends, but as a rule they elected to remain with me. Left alone in such a place there is no knowing what might happen from the evil spirits which lurk in the forest depths, but company, noise and fire scare them. So my boys thought it their duty to remain and see that no harm befell me.



In those days magisterial work in Fiji was much as it used to be in India before the very perfect administrative system of the present time. The District Officer was not only the police, but the judge and jury also. Like as it was in Hindustan, you caught your man before breakfast and after it tried and convicted him. It was a rough-and-ready form of justice but led to much cavilling. Afterwards, when I went to another district where there was a fair sprinkling of white settlers, I was subjected to much criticism by one of them, who was my thorn in the flesh and one of those who were always "agin the government." Whenever my police proceeded against him he stigmatised me as a persecutor, tyrant, judge and jury rolled into one. In his many and frequent rows with the natives he would, in those instances when it suited his convenience, invoke my aid as the chief of the local police, and demand my assistance and protection. That was in our Cinderella days; now the legal and police work is completely separated, and the Fiji Constabulary has many young and capable sub-inspectors, inspectors and other grades who prosecute offenders, leaving to the magistrates the exercise merely of their judicial functions.

Theoretically the police were always supposed to prosecute, but the Fijians, the old rural police of my days were incapable of such a duty. In 1890 I acted for the Stipendiary Magistrate at Mba, who went home on leave. The district, a large and important one, had many European and Indian residents and my hands were very full. There was a white police-sergeant quartered there, but he grossly misbehaved himself and was dismissed, and I was left with only the Fijian rural sergeant and his staff of constables. He was a shrewd and clever man in native affairs and I thought that at least he could undertake the Indian larceny cases. The wily Hindu, however, was too much for him, and after prosecuting one very evidently trumped-up case I asked why ever he undertook it.

"Oh," said he, "the complainant came to me and cried, so I thought it must be true."

## CHAPTER XIII

### 'The Lost Legion

"There's a convict more in the Central Jail,  
Behind the old mud wall;  
There's a lifter less on the Border trail,  
And the Queen's Peace over all,  
Dear boys,  
The Queen's Peace over all."—KIPLING.

WITH so small a police force, only a sergeant and six constables, it would have been almost impossible to carry on in so wild and rough a province as Tholo East and to keep the station tidy, had it not been for what I called the reserve, otherwise the native prisoners, the inmates of the Provincial Jail. They were to the Colonial police as the old Militia was to the Line, or the present-day Territorial Force to the Regular Army. In *The Gladiators*, Whyte Melville's delightful book, we learn how Titus enrolled the members of that outcast profession in "The Lost Legion," which fought at the siege of Jerusalem. On one occasion, we, too, used a gang of Fijian prisoners for a military purpose, so I dubbed them in my mind as our "Lost Legion."

The old Fijian law was that of the club, which, like our own Articles of War, awarded death for nearly every offence. The latter, however, is somewhat milder, as it has an alternative in "such other punishment as may hereinafter be provided." Should one happen to be on board a man-of-war when the justice of the seas is being meted out one can hear those unfortunates who cannot carry their liquor discreetly being told that by the Articles of War the penalty for their offence is "death or such other penalty as may be hereinafter provided," and the sentence which follows is usually a few hours' cells. When we hoisted our flag in Fiji something less frightful than the execution of the offender had to be substituted, and fine or imprisonment became the remedy.

Many of the offences against native law and custom we should consider venial, but whatever it is, whether a serious crime or a mere peccadillo, the Fijian goes to jail lightheartedly, imprisonment being considered no disgrace. An unfortunate gentleman commits a slip and is sent to prison, where he is subject to a certain amount of restraint, but the food is good and regular, and, after all, what do other things matter? For a time he is under a cloud, but does his penance and returns with full absolution to his friends, who are too well-bred to throw the unhappy occurrence in his teeth. I once had a native friend called Paul, or as it is pronounced in the soft Fijian "Paula." He had unduly admired another man's wife to the neglect of his own, and upon the complaint of the latter retired for a year to the seclusion of the Provincial Jail. He spent his time in cultivating food crops for the rations of the police and the prisoners, and used to go on circuit with me as a canoeman and baggage carrier with other gentlemen, temporarily under a cloud, who like himself, according to native idea, were being purged of their sins by a righteous punishment. They did not regard themselves as prisoners, calling themselves "Government men" during the term of their sentence and tendered to me, as their head, the most devoted loyalty.

At the end of his year Paula returned to his own village at Mbue-thandra, where we found Nathola-uli, as mentioned in the last chapter. He was at once nominated as the constable there by *Mbuli* Muaira, the chief of the district, but to the great scandal of all Paula refused the distinction. His enraged superior haled him before me on the crime of rebellion, which in Biblical terms he designated as the sin of witchcraft (1 Samuel xv. 23). But the prisoner and I were old friends and understood each other, and when I said to him, "Paula, what is this I hear, that you are resisting the authority of your district chief and are refusing to take up the office of village constable when duly and legally nominated thereto?" He replied that he was quite prepared to assume the appointment, but his wife objected! She had said to him, "Look here, Paula, you have just returned from holding one Government position for a year, and here you are about to take another. I want to know who's going to help nurse the baby. If you don't, and if you go and be a policeman, I'm off to my own tribe at Nandrau."

"Well, sir," continued Paula, "you know how obstinate, benighted and pigminded a woman can be. What could I do?"

The case was dismissed.

Opponents and critics of the native system of government used to complain that infidelity to the marriage bond and similar offences

were punished by imprisonment, and that Fijians generally were hedged round with all sorts of restrictions, and so they were, but only in accordance with their own ancient institutions. The old club law was reduced to writing and embodied in the Native Regulations, which retained all which was good and proper and rejected the improper. Annually the *Mbose Vakaturang-a* or Great Council of Chiefs met and recommended additions or alterations to the native law. These were then considered by the Native Regulations Board, consisting of Europeans and Fijians and, if approved, were submitted to the Legislative Council, the Parliament of the Colony. Passed there and assented to by the Governor, they became effective. In addition to the Great Council of Chiefs each province had a council of its own and could enact its own bye-laws, which, if sanctioned by the Governor in writing, could be duly enforced.

It was only men who went to jail under the Native Regulations. Women were punished by sentences to be carried out in their own homes. Suppose a co-respondent was condemned to six months' hard labour, the female delinquent would be ordered to plait six fathoms of mats, or make a certain quantity of bark cloth, or so many earthenware pots or balls of salt, according to the work she had been brought up to. All pottery work and salt-making is done by women. Infidelity to the marriage vow did not necessarily imply proceedings for divorce as it does with us, although that could be decreed if sued for. Ordinarily speaking an injured husband would be satisfied with the imprisonment of his rival, and, if he asked, his wife would be allowed to go free. It was best that she did, because were she directed to labour at the production of certain articles, she would make it the excuse for neglecting all her domestic duties, and every time her husband asked her to do anything she would retort that the Government work came first, and it afforded her opportunities to sulk. The articles she turned out were sold by public auction at the sittings of the various courts and the money thus derived applied to public purposes.

The intricate restrictions of tribal law created what many of our modern papers call "police-made criminals." Perhaps, even with us, convicts so created would not bear the stigma that usually applies to a person who has suffered a term of imprisonment. In my days Fijians seldom committed any offences against our English laws. Occasionally, of course, they did, but whatever it was it entailed no social disgrace amongst their own people. No matter what a man did, when he had completed his sentence he would go home and be kindly and lovingly received by his own people, who would embrace

and kiss him, and he and they would do a little *tang-i* or mutual crying. Then would follow the *mburua*, a sort of feast of atonement or funeral meal, after which the past was supposed to be buried and forgiven.

Such was the fidelity and docility of Fijian prisoners that in the old Cinderella days they filled the positions of office messengers in all the public departments. These were as far as possible long-sentence men, and very efficient and useful they were. Some of them got to be so well known that we jokingly used to wonder how the departments would carry on when their times were up. One of them, Mbamba, came from my district. He came before me in the Provincial Court at Narorokoyawa, the chief village of Noemalu, whilst I was on circuit, and was convicted of an aggravated assault upon his wife. In a fit of rage he had thrown scalding water on her and inflicted dreadful injuries. He was sentenced to two years' hard labour, but escaped from custody almost directly after his trial. I noticed when I retired that night to the upper end of the large house that had been assigned as my quarters, that the faithful Anaiyasa and another of my followers came and lay down on the mats at the lower end. I was very tired, and as it was quite common for a few of my men to use my house whilst we were on the march, if they were crowded in their own, I said nothing. Subsequently Anaiyasa told me they were afraid that Mbamba would return in the night and murder me. It was not I, however, that he was after but his brother-in-law who had given the information which led to his conviction. Mbamba got away home and nearly did for him with an axe, and then took to the forest country about Mount Victoria. I sent the Chief Constable of Noemalu with a posse of village police, and they chivied the fugitive for about five weeks and hunted him from pillar to post, and at last he surrendered and was brought down to Vunindawa. I was very anxious lest he should bolt again and took special precautions. He told me not to worry as he had had more than enough of the solitude of the jungle, and was prepared to stand the consequence of his misdeeds. As he had attempted to commit murder he was indicted and committed for trial in the Resident Commissioner's Court, where he got a further five years. He was sent to the Central Jail at Suva, where by his exemplary conduct he became a shining light and head messenger in the Colonial Secretary's office. There he became a most trusted member of the staff.

Kipling, in one of his stories, tells of a man who had to rule certain forms, who used to declare that if he did them wrongly it



would throw the whole of the Government of India out of joint. I often wondered how the Secretariat would carry on without Mbamba, but as Dean Farrar says in his life of St. Paul, no one is irreplaceable, and Mbamba's post was filled by a lively young murderer, whose death sentence had been commuted into penal servitude for life on account of his youth.

The name of the latter was Natha, which means "the evil one," and it turned out to be quite ominous. In 1894 some people of Seangenga, on the Island of Vanua Levu, killed and ate a couple of village constables who went up there to serve summonses. Natha was an accessory after the murder, and ran round with a spear which he plunged into the victims' bodies after they had been killed. I was present in the Supreme Court when the case was tried. The Government paid a leading barrister, a Q.C. (of course it was in Queen Victoria's time) to defend the prisoners. His plea for Natha was that he was but a boy and in mere wantonness had done as he had. He was reprieved, and eventually succeeded Mbamba. He was a nice, good-looking youth, learnt English and studied whilst in the Colonial Secretary's office, and his good conduct speedily earned a pardon. The last thing I saw of him was when he became butler to the gentleman who is now Sir William Allardyce, the Governor of Tasmania.

Mbamba upon his release came to me and enlisted in the rural police, and eventually returning to Nasongo, his native place, became the Chief Constable of that district, and died during the term of his service.

The Government offices at Suva close at 4 p.m. The messengers used to remain a bit longer to sweep up, etc., and then had to run down as hard as they could to the Central Jail to be present at roll-call at 5 p.m., it being a strict point of honour not to be absent at that time. The reputation of the jail had always to be considered.

Whenever there was a dance or a large dinner-party at Government House a gang of good, clean, respectable Fijian prisoners was always sent up to help wash up the glasses, plates, etc. Sir Charles Major, who is now Chief Justice in British Guiana and was so in Fiji, on one of the occasions when he was Acting Governor gave a dance. He told me that after all the guests had departed at about 2 a.m. he heard a fearful row in one of the back verandahs, and found that the native warder, who had come up in charge of the prisoners, had been drinking, not wisely but too well, of the dregs in the glasses, and, sad to say, was hilariously noisy. The prisoners were dreadfully upset

to think that he had so far forgotten himself, and were trying to quieten him and carry him home so that no scandal should fall upon the jail!

There are heaps of other stories. I could tell how one of our Chief Justices spent a night in a provincial jail. He went to visit one of the Stipendiary Magistrates unexpectedly. The S.M. was away on circuit, and, not understanding Fijian, the C.J. who arrived at the station in the dark put up with the prisoners. But I believe that story has been told already, so will refrain from repeating it.

One Boxing Day there was a sports meeting held at Levuka, and a fight occurred between the Fijian police and some Solomon Islanders, in which the latter got well hammered. Jack London, in one of his books, *Adventure* I think, lays the scene in what he calls the "hard bit Solomons." The designation is most suitable, and even after we established our Protectorate head-hunting and cannibalism were rife. Mr. C. Woodford C.M.G., was the first Commissioner there. He also graduated in Fiji, and by his steady pressure and perseverance at last evolved law and order. But the Solomon Islander, anywhere you find him, is a ticklish subject. One would have thought that in Fiji where they were only in small numbers, that with the Queen's Peace over all, they would have behaved themselves. But no, they wanted revenge for their mauling at Levuka. There was to be another sports meeting at Suva on New Year's Day, and they determined to attack the police then. It was rather a roundabout way, as the force there was not composed of the same men as that at Levuka. But it fitted in with their style of reasoning. I happened to be in Suva for the Christmas holidays, and my colleague in the A.N.C., who also was Superintendent of Police, asked me to give him a hand and see the business through. He was afraid that the Solomon Islanders might get out of hand altogether, and not confine their attentions to the police only. I went to see Sir John Thurston, who was our Governor then, and asked his permission to utilise sixty able-bodied Fijians then in the Central Jail as a reserve. He gave his permission and we threw a small picket of the A.N.C. into the Suva police station with a bugler. Another bugler was hid in a clump of trees half-way down the road towards the jail. If anything happened, the one at the police station was to sound the alarm, when the rest of the A.N.C. from their barracks at Government House were to take the Solomon Islanders in flank, and the Lost Legion of the jail, upon the call from the clump of trees, were to charge their rear with pick and crowbar. But nothing happened, as the Solomon men saw we



# IN GALA DRESS.

In my garden at Vunindawa, in order to perform a *meke* or native dance before the Governor,  
Sir John Thurston.

*Photo by Sir John Thurston.*



were prepared and they never attack unless they can take their foe unaware. I did not think they would, and towards midnight I made a round of the town by myself. There were many of the supposed would-be rioters about, and I talked to some whom I knew. One of them, Tomo, lived at Viria on the Upper Rewa, which for revenue purposes was under me. I asked him what he was doing, and he politely replied that hearing I was in town he had come in to see me and pay his respects. Some time afterwards when things had sobered down some of the Solomon men owned that they had intended to have attacked the police, had they had a favourable chance.

Soon after I had taken up my quarters at Vunindawa I had an experience of our happy-go-lucky ways. One of the Suva civil police turned up with a Fijian prisoner, a warrant, handcuffs and a letter from the Superintendent, asking that he might be taken over and delivered to the European Stipendiary Magistrate at Mba. He said that he was very short of constables and surmised that I too would be hard up for men. He therefore suggested that I should send the prisoner on to the nearest Native Stipendiary Magistrate, who could then pass him on to his next colleague, and so on until the ultimate destination was reached. Urgent letters are passed from village to village by a native system called *vakandewa*, which is very effective, and the Superintendent had this in his mind when he proposed the method just mentioned. One of my constables took the prisoner over and escorted him to my native colleague at Narokorokoyawa, twenty-four miles further on the way, right in the interior of the island, leaving some eighty miles still to be traversed. My man returned saying he had handed over his charge as ordered. The next thing which happened was that I got a furious letter from the magistrate at Mba, saying that the prisoner had arrived without any escort, and had delivered himself up with his warrant, handcuffs and route paper, and what sort of a way was that of carrying out official routine and duty? His effusion did not perturb me as we all knew him as a wild Irishman, and notoriously the most irregular officer in the Service. He used to boast that he only looked at the Ordinances to see what the maximum sentences were, and he was in continual hot water over his frequent delinquencies. With his Celtic impulses the romance of the whole affair ought to have appealed to him. The prisoner was a notoriously bad character, and had only delivered himself up as he had been put upon his honour. When I investigated the matter I found that my native colleague duly detailed a village *ovisa* to take the prisoner on in the manner prescribed. On the way



the escort said to his charge: "Look here, my friend, this is an extremely disagreeable job; my father is very ill and I ought to be looking after him, and here am I detailed to take you over to the next post. According to the custom of our country I beg you to be *yalo vinaka* (of a good spirit); here's your warrant, handcuffs and my route paper, go and deliver yourself up." The soul of the prisoner was good, and he duly turned up at the police station at Mba, as already told.

The prisoners, too, had their bards, as may be witnessed by the subjoined "Song of the Magistrate's cat." It refers to an ancient animal of that species on which the prisoners in the jail at Levuka feasted on a certain Christmas Day. The cat is not an indigenous animal, but after its importation some of the species took to the bush and there throve and multiplied, and the Fijians, who already were rat eaters, added it to their dietary list. They say that white men are fools, because they will not eat it and do not know how good it is. By some it is even regarded as a delicacy. I was travelling in the hills once with Dr., afterwards Sir William, Macgregor, when he was Acting Governor. We had to spend one night in a Namosi village. At the *kava* drinking which ensued the head man gave as his toast, "Oh! for the head of a wild cat!" I asked him if it was good and he simply replied "*Sombu*," which is an exclamation of admiration.

At great feasts the food is solemnly shared out by the heralds and when the yams and *ndalo* have been duly divided amongst the different communities and stacked up on the village green, the pigs are carved and their joints placed upon the different heaps, the head being considered the piece of honour. Then the chief herald goes round, and laying his hand upon each portion proclaims the name of the people to whom it belongs. They in response clap their hands, the Fijian method of returning thanks, come forward with leaves and baskets and carry off their shares.

The inmates of the jail enlivened their Christmas with satire and humour, and ate the old tom-cat of Mr. J. K. M. Ross, the Stipendiary Magistrate at Levuka, with all the pomp and ceremony of a great festival. But alas! he was old and lean, and there was as little fat in him as in the jib of a cutter. The prisoners at Levuka belonged to the maritime tribes and understood the simile they made use of.

## THE SONG OF THE MAGISTRATE'S CAT.

*(The Christmas Carol of the Prisoners in Jail at Levuka.)*

Upon the mats you must not lie ;  
 I labour hard, I sob, I sigh ;  
 The feast of Christmas draweth nigh.  
 Above us, Mr. Ross doth cry :  
 "Go ! catch me now my old black cat !  
 Put in a bag, and bear away,  
 And pitch the rascal in the bay !"  
 "Sir Judge, thy pardon now I pray,"  
 Thus said a youth of Mathuata ;  
 "For your old puss my mouth doth water,  
 I'd dearly like to eat him roast.  
 Cheer up ! and make of him the most !  
 Forgotten we by every friend,  
 And unto us no fowls they send,  
 And pigs are further off than Tonga.  
 At Christmas plenteous are the dishes,  
 Those thoughtless friends eat pork and fishes  
 Afar in our dear, distant homes.  
 In jail we've just this old tom-cat,  
 We're roasting whole, insides and all—  
 His giblets make a tasty ball !"

Up rose Mbua's Childe and spake :  
 "Let us divide this chieflike bake,  
 That one and all their share may take.  
 A shoulder for Lomai Viti ;  
 Mbua may have a roasted thigh ;  
 The body for the men of Tai ;  
 The head is Mathuata's share."  
 Lean was old Tom, and tough and rare,  
 And no more fat was on each rib  
 Than on a cutter's flying-jib !

It is therefore not astonishing that Sir Everard im Thurn, the last of the Governors under whom I served, described the Fijian prison system, in a long minute, as being of the nature of "Comic opera." It suited, however, the genius of the people and served its time, and happy were we that it was so, and that there was no tragedy with it during my forty years' residence in Fiji.

Sir Everard, one of the most sympathetic of our rulers, was right. There was no crime in the Colony to speak of until the Indian coolies

made their appearance. Although on the whole they were a useful and estimable body, until emissaries spread disaffection, there was a considerable sprinkling of criminals among them, and seldom a quarterly sessions passed without the infliction of the capital punishment. The intercourse between Fijian and Hindu prisoners in the various jails must in time inevitably lead to the contamination of the former, and call for sterner discipline than that of the old native system.

The effect of the Indian impact upon the South Seas is interesting, and as this narrative proceeds I hope to say something about it.

## CHAPTER XIV

### Church & State

THE commonest wish at the drinking of *yangona* and the pious aphorism propounded on the presentation of whales' teeth, food and other property is: "May the Religion and Government flourish," equivalent to our old toast of "Church and State."

Wesleyanism, to all intents and purposes, occupies the position of the established religion of Fiji. It was the first form of Christianity to be introduced, and was brought to the group by Messrs. Cargill and Cross, the pioneer missionaries in 1835. About that date the leading Protestant denominations were showing great activity in the South Seas. To prevent overlapping, and for the purpose of not creating confusion amongst their converts, they divided the islands and agreed not to encroach on each other. The Church of England took the groups known as Melanesia, the Wesleyans Fiji, the London Missionary Society Samoa and New Guinea, and the Presbyterians the New Hebrides. This compact has been loyally observed, and although Fiji is also the seat of an Anglican Bishop, he and his clergy minister only to the English community. The Church of Rome, considering all outside of her pale as heretics, had, of course, no hand in this. Being late in entering the field, she never got the same grip on Fijian life as Wesleyanism, but the introduction of a different form of doctrine added to the difficulty of administration among the natives.

Some time after 1884, the date of my joining the Fijian Service, another sect appeared, the Seventh Day Adventists, founded apparently upon a vision granted to somebody in the United States about the close of the eighteenth century. Although its introducers were good, homely men, who led the most exemplary lives, it proved a veritable causer of strife and another Cave of Adullam. All those turned out by the Government, or by the Wesleyans and Roman Catholics, flocked to the new body. It gave to such a fresh start, and was an illustration of the old adage: "It is never too late to

mend." A youthful friend, who entered the Government service through me, left after a short career. He then joined the Wesleyans as a teacher and was expelled before long. Then he tried his luck with the Roman Catholics, and with them, too, his stay was but brief. Then he became a Seventh Day Adventist, but whether he remained steadfast I do not know. He meant well, but his wayward nature was too strong. I have an interesting little paper on Fijian snails which he wrote for me. That little mollusc has become almost extinct in Viti Levu owing to the introduction of the omnivorous mongoose.

It always puzzled me how the Seventh Day people, or *Kavitu* (sevenths), as the Fijians called them, ever attracted converts. In regard to food, the chief joy of Fijian life, the discipline was most rigid, and the new doctrine seems a resuscitation of the Law of Moses, the yoke which proved too heavy for those for whom it was intended. Pork, crabs, prawns were *tambu'ed*, and so, too, was *yangona* and tobacco. That, however, was a matter of internal economy affecting the faithful only. But the reinstatement of the seventh day as the Sabbath, with the consequent resumption of everyday work on Sundays, was an unmitigated public nuisance and created disturbances.

In a certain village within my jurisdiction some of the inhabitants had gone over to the new way, and proceeded to thatch a house close to the Wesleyan Church one Sunday. I have endeavoured in a previous chapter to show what a noisy job thatching is. It is carried on to a loud chorus of yells of "*Rau, rau, rau*," or "Leaves, leaves, leaves," being demands for bundles of thatch to be pitched up to the men on the roof. It was too much for the congregation at prayer in the adjoining building, who, headed by the pastor, sallied forth and pitched into the *Kavitu* with their fists in true British fashion, and drove their opponents from the village. In due course the matter came before the Provincial Court, where the Wesleyans were charged with assault and battery. They pleaded provocation and, proving it, were acquitted.

Shortly afterwards I was making a round in Tholo North, and having ridden over Mount Victoria was passing the night at Nasongo. I was tired after the long, hot ride over the rough hill track and sought the seclusion of my mosquito curtain at an early hour. Scarcely had I laid down when I heard voices just outside the native house in which I was, and my orderly came to my bedside and said that the white gentleman, the head of the *Kavitu*, wished to see me. I turned out, and my visitor proceeded to state his view of the



recent encounter between his people and the Wesleyans and to ask for protection for his converts. I told him that, of course, I would see that they were not persecuted in any way, but at the same time I expected that they would refrain from aggravating their fellow-villagers by unseemly behaviour on Sundays. He was quite reasonable and saw my side of the case, and promised to admonish his followers on the subject. Towards the close of our interview he said, "Sir, I never inculcate anything not laid down by Our Lord Jesus Christ." Foolishly I was tempted to enter into a small argument. "Oh!" replied I, "is that so? Why, then, do you forbid your adherents to drink *yangona*? I always have thought that the miracle at Cana in Galilee was a proof in favour of a moderate enjoyment of wine." "Ah!" answered the *Kavitu* leader, "that was not wine as we understand it; it was only the pure fresh juice of the vine. Our Lord could have nothing to do with anything that contained fermentation or death." Although I did not think as he did, it flashed through my mind that theology was not my strong point, and that I had better pass on to something about which there could be no mistake at all, so I said, "Well, what about tobacco? You forbid your votaries the use of it; there is nothing in the Bible against that." A beaming smile spread over my opponent's countenance, and with the utmost conviction he triumphantly asserted: "The Bible most strictly forbids it. Does it not say in Deuteronomy that the noxious weed shall be rooted up from the land, and what else but tobacco can have been meant?" Then I recollected that I had ridden that morning across the dividing range and was tired. So I said good night and returned to bed.

Wesleyanism, owing to its dominant numbers, has come to be tacitly acknowledged as the State religion, although it has no official recognition as such. In my time it was the only denomination whose members were employed and paid as chaplains by the Government. Every Sunday at Nandarivatu I attended the A.N.C. church parades, the service being conducted by our native Wesleyan padre. After "revally," each day was opened by roll call, after which the men, led by the chaplain, said the Lord's Prayer on parade in a low voice and with bent heads.

On a small station like Vunindawa, where I was for eight years until I moved on to Nandarivatu, there was no chaplain, but every Sunday one of the clergy from an adjacent village came and held a service for the police and prisoners in the Court House. Every little hamlet has its *Vakavuvuli*, which means the source or origin of learning, and hence we commonly designated such as teachers. That was

the first grade in the Wesleyan ministry. He merely holds services in the villages and teaches the children the elements of education. Immediately above him is the *Vakatawa*, literally the man in charge, but officially called the catechist by the ruling body. He is equivalent in our system to the Rural Dean, as a certain number of parishes are administered by him. Then comes the *Talatala-i-taukei* or native minister, roughly corresponding to our Archdeacons. He can perform marriages, and is duly posted to that effect in the *Government Gazette*. Over all is the white missionary, the head of the circuit, as the Wesleyans call it. I used to regard him in my own mind as the Bishop of the Diocese; and over all was the Chairman of the Methodist Mission, whom in turn I looked upon as the Archbishop.

The Wesleyans like to call themselves Methodists, and so good is their organisation that they well deserve the appellation. Their system in Fiji is for their native teachers to exchange pulpits every Sunday. They start at dawn and pass from village to village holding services, and thus each community gets a change of preachers. These are usually accompanied by one or two youths, friends, and in many cases aspirants also to the ministry get their preliminary training at home. They carry their tutor's pulpit get-up, generally a white *sulu* and shirt, collar and black tie, and his books. Travelling through the dense jungle wet with dew or rain and the fording of the frequent streams necessitates a change of raiment when the time comes for holding the services. This duty rendered to their teacher by his scholars is cheerfully and willingly given and has its due reward. At every village to which these wandering preachers go a substantial meal is provided, called the *tali vunau* or the return for the sermon. As much of this as is possible is eaten, and it is *tara* or lawful on the Sabbath to take home the rest. But it is *tambu* to accept money on that day. When one of these itinerant parsons performed the service for us at Vunindawa at first I humbly used to tender a small collection. It was always refused then, with a request that it might be given again on the morrow, when it was always called for. Then, when I began to learn the ropes, I gave the sergeant a tin of bully beef. He and the police would provide the yams, and thus we were able to provide a proper *tali vunau*.

The late Reverend George Brown, so well known in the South Seas as the General Secretary of the Australian Methodist Society, and so much liked from his liberal and generous views, gave me a splendid example of how his native converts regarded such a matter. Before he went to live at Sydney as the General Secretary he had a life's experience in the mission field. His story was about the *balolo*, the

wonderful annelid, or sea worm, resembling vermicelli, which annually makes its appearance in untold myriads. They come up first in October, but it is in November that the main phenomenon occurs; then the waters of the ocean are literally thick with these little wriggling animals, and they can then be scooped up by the bucketful. Those versed in their habits can, by the stage of the moon, predict their advent almost to the very hour. Dr. Brown told me that on one occasion in a district of which he was presiding missionary the *balolo* rose on a Sunday. That precluded the Protestant part of the community from having anything to do with it, but not the Roman Catholics. They went out with every boat and canoe they could lay hand on, and returned laden to the gunwhales. They duly cooked the greatly esteemed delicacy and, with usual native generosity, brought large messes of it to the tribal hall and presented them to their Protestant friends, in whose minds ensued a direful struggle. Their mouths watered, but was it lawful to eat that which had been caught and cooked on the Sabbath? For a while the stern dictates of their religion prevailed, but at last an old greybeard plumped down on the mats in front of one of the coveted dishes, saying, "I remember what St. Paul says: 'Eat that which is put before thee, asking no questions for conscience sake.'" That solved the difficulty, and the hitherto dissentients fell to with a will.

Tholo East, my first district, was in the Mbau circuit, presided over by the Chairman of the Methodist Mission in Fiji, the Reverend Frederick Langham, the Archbishop. He was a very fine man both mentally and physically, though inclined to be somewhat narrow-minded and of the smite-them-hip-and-thigh genus. I used to compare him to the pastor I had read about in an American book called, I think, *The Letters of a Self-made Man to his Son*, who is depicted as one incapable of understanding the modern conceptions of a spiritual Gehenna, where the damned suffered the pangs of mental remorse, but whose belief was in a material Hell seven times heated. Such, I think, was Mr. Langham. But he had the saving sense of humour and did not lose his temper when arguing with an opponent. He had a rabid dislike of *yangona* and tobacco, and he used to try and get his people to abjure them. For my part I could never see why one should be cut off from the simple pleasures of life, and when we met occasionally we used to dispute the matter. But although he was dead against the use of both these products of Fiji, there was always a kindly twinkle in his eyes when we argued with each other. He was a good sportsman and did not seem to know what fear was. My stud in those days consisted principally of a ramping pony

stallion, who always used to try and get rid of his mounts by cow-kicking, or trying to brush them off like mosquitoes with one of his hind legs. He was decidedly an aggravating sort of animal, which, added to the break-neck properties of our highland tracks, made riding a bit of a trial. Yet when Mr. Langham made his annual visitation and I used to offer him a mount, he never refused and stuck on gaily, whilst Kallicrates, as my little beast was called, performed.

He told me that he had visited the upper part of my district whilst the inhabitants there were still cannibals. He was accompanied by some of his native converts from the lower river, and on one occasion they had to run for their lives. He was outstripped and was at his last gasp and momentarily expecting the club. Suddenly there occurred a brain wave, and he turned sharply round and faced the pursuers. Then he whipped out his false teeth, placed them on the palm of his hand and offered them to the nearest foe. With a wild yell the enemy turned about and fled.

I knew of an almost similar occurrence. On my first voyage to Fiji I was shipmate with an ex-Confederate officer. It was not very long after the great American Civil War. He was a nephew of General Beauregard, the celebrated Southern commander, and had left his leg on one of the battlefields. He was fitted with a most excellent cork substitute, and, save for a slight limp, there was no difference in his gait, and it was some time before I knew of his misfortune. When we arrived in Fiji, a planter who had come up to Levuka in his whaleboat suggested to P., the owner of the leg, that a little fun might be got out of it. Calling one of his boatmen, he told him to go and pull P.'s boot off. The strap which held the limb having been loosed in readiness for the occasion, at the first tug the wretched boatman rolled over on the mats with the leg in his hands. With a wild yell he dashed out of the house and disappeared into the bush, where he remained for some days fearful that he had seriously injured one of the wonderful white *turang-a*.

A friend who read the manuscript of this suggests that I may be thought guilty of plagiarism, as Sir Rider Haggard has told us in *King Solomon's Mines* how the "dignified crowd of Kukuanas gave a simultaneous yell of horror, and bolted back" at the sight of Good's false teeth. In the parody *King Solomon's Wives*, by Hyder Ragged, the following occurs: "'We will give them a wiggling!'" I cried, hastily dancing on my peruke, and, unscrewing my cork leg, I waved it defiantly in the air."

The editions of both these books that I have consulted are dated



1887. The episode of Mr. Langham's teeth happened in the early 'seventies, and that of the leg in 1870. In 1871 the owner of the latter commanded the first Mba Expedition, in which I served. We managed to get him to the scene of action on an old grey horse, and it has been a continued subject of wonder to me that we ever got the animal through that rugged, broken country. He made a splendid target, but the musketry of the *kai* Tholo was defective and the only casualty on our side was that our commander broke his cork leg off just above the ankle in leading the charge at Thumbu. I remember that when we got him hoisted on to his charger again the foot of the cork leg hung down dangling, just held by a shied of leather.

To appreciate the desperate fright of a Fijian upon such an occurrence one should know something of the untutored state in which they were in those days. One of the inland people told me what happened when the first Wesleyan native teacher got established in one of the upper Wainimala villages. Amongst his possessions was a small clock. Shortly after his arrival an old cannibal from further inland turned up. It was about midday when he arrived, when the village was empty through the inhabitants being away in the bush at their food plantation. According to custom, he entered the first house that took his fancy, which happened to be the teacher's. There on the big wooden box, the principal article of furniture, was the clock steadily and solemnly clicking. The old chap stared at it open-mouthed, then he crouched on the mats and looked at it first from one side and then from another. The raconteur used to mimic the whole scene to me. Then with a yell he bounded out, loudly proclaiming that he was not going to stay in a bewitched house containing a devil which never left off talking.

One result of being within the diocese or circuit of the President of the Wesleyan Mission was that all the subordinate native clergy were the flower of the flock and the pick of the training institutions, and were principally members of chiefly families—Fijian gentlemen, in fact. They were decidedly a fine lot of men, and maintained a much higher status of life than the ordinary people. Their houses were cleaner and neater, and they had better ideas of cookery. As a rule, during my travels I put up with the head men, but in some of the villages where the accommodation was doubtful I used to seek refuge at the pastor's. About four miles further up the Wainimala from Vunindawa was Nairukuruku, the seat of the native minister in charge of part of my province, one of those whom I have likened unto Archdeacons. For the time that I was in Tholo East, Ratu



Jona Uluinatheva (The Crown of the South) was the gentleman there. He was a chief of high rank from the island of Kandavu, in the southern portion of the group, a particularly fine man, and we visited each other frequently. He had a small preparatory school where aspirants for the ministry received their preliminary training. Order and discipline were combined with good native customs, and the students whilst being educated were self-supporting, maintained their own food supply and kept their houses neat and tidy. When I got hipped and bored by the life on the station I would frequently go over to Nairukuruku and spend the day. Sometimes when naval officers and others visited me I took them over there to hear the student choir sing Moody and Sankey's hymns. We used to ride over and return by water for the sake of the fun of canoe travelling, shooting the rapids and getting a pot at the ducks. Ratu Jona's wife was an excellent cook, and generally regaled her guests with savoury dishes of chickens stewed with yams and shallots.

My immediate clerical neighbour was Esava Kombiti, the *Vakatawa* or catechist at Nakorovatu, the village adjoining Vunindawa. He was a chief from the island of Gau and a very fine fellow. Conjointly we translated Arthur's *History of England* into Fijian, which up to the time of my leaving was being used in the Wesleyan schools.

These neighbours often used to drop in at Vunindawa, and from their conversations I got much valuable insight into native life and their way of regarding the Bible, which with *Pilgrim's Progress* were the only books in the vernacular, and their sole stock of literature in those days. Living with primitive people like the Fijians made it easier to understand the early patriarchal institutions of Biblical history. Circumcision and the presentation of children to their deity and their naming has much in common with the usages of Judaism.

Sunday after Sunday I attended the native services and listened to many sermons. The Fijians are very eloquent and poetical in their diction. Having with one bound jumped from their own primitive conditions into our present day civilisation, they did not understand the gradation of history. On one occasion I marched my men from Nandarivatu to Rakiraki to meet the Commissioner of Native Affairs, who is now Sir William Allardyce, K.C.M.G., the present Governor of Tasmania. He came to install the *Roko* or native Lieutenant-Governor of the Ra Province, and we to provide the guard of honour and to afford a background of the pomp and circumstance of military array. The Sunday before the ceremony the native minister of the district held service and preached to us in the Rakiraki Court House. The subject of his discourse was the

death of Absalom. The description of his life was set forth in eloquent and romantic language, and his high birth and lineage descanted on. Not only was he the son of a King, but his mother in her own right was also of royal rank. (Owing to polygamy, Fijians assume the maternal status, generally speaking.) Therefore he was a chief of chiefs and the handsomest man in Israel, whose long locks were polled but once a year. "Just fancy," said the preacher, "what would have happened then had he been one of us—what feasting, merrymaking, running of foot races and bouts at wrestling for rich prizes there would have been! But, alas! how sad was his end, for we now come to the time when Absalom was discovered caught in the boughs of the oak. Then up came Joab, the captain of the host, who slew him with three small darts. My friends, they must have had some hidden meaning which we do not understand, for how much easier it would have been to have picked up a Martini-Henry and shot him!"

We to whom he was holding forth were armed with that weapon, and the allusion was partly intended as a delicate compliment to our might and prowess. Fijians love, too, euphony and words that have a pleasant jingle, and *Matene-Anare*, as they pronounce the name of that rifle, has that quality to them.

On another occasion I heard a sermon on the death of the son of the widow of Nain. "What grief that poor woman must have had!" said the expounder of the discourse. "And I think that we may take it for granted that he was a good boy and never made trouble when he was told to boil the kettle for tea."

## CHAPTER XV

### Home Rule

THE Resident Commissioner, almost immediately upon my appointment as his Assistant, shot me into the midst of affairs. It was supposed that he would always come up to hold the Provincial Councils, the little parliaments which regulated our local affairs. However, his work on the Lands Commission and in the courts on the Lower Rewa was growing daily, and he passed on to me as much of the administrative details in Tholo as he could. Within two months of my being gazetted he directed me to hold the Provincial Council in his stead. This was a bit difficult for me, as natives never show the same respect for understrappers as they do for the principal, rather do they strive to make the latter's life a burden. On plantations Fijian labourers are fairly amenable to their master, but they worry and harry the overseers to the utmost of their ability. There was a shipping firm in Suva who employed a large gang of natives for cargo work. The man in charge was fortunately a tough old salt, who knew how to use his hands. Fijians are not allowed to sign on for more than a year. Frequently it is for shorter periods, and men are always coming and going. Whenever a new lot arrived, each morning at roll-call a chosen champion would step forth and challenge the *boso*, their adaptation of our boss, a word which pleases them, to fight. The challengers had strength but not science, whilst the defender had both. This went on until all the fancy men had been stretched out, after which they became obedient servants, tacitly admitting the right of conquest. Of course, they never could treat me in that way, as, to use one of their own expressions, I was one that could bite, and in the Courts could inflict exemplary punishments. In a way I had to be reckoned with, but still, if there was a chance of thwarting me legally they would do so. I once wanted to get some of the people to do a little mail-carrying. They refused in a letter in which they rudely remarked that I did not understand them, but that Mr. Carew did. When I went on promotion to Tholo North as Resident Com-

missioner, and then, in addition, received Tholo East on Mr. Carew's retirement, I was given full honours, including the *tama*, the divine acclamation accorded to the incarnation of the ancestral god. Secretly in my own mind I was rather astounded at having achieved such an awful greatness. But the way of the underling is hard. Afterwards, when I had the command of a party of the A.N.C., our garrison inland, although my orders were hardly ever gainsaid, the men made it as hard as they could for the subalterns.

There is a curious mixture of extreme veneration and latent covert insolence in the Fijian. They revere the Governor as their supreme chief and the representative of the Sovereign, who is the divine incarnation and exponent of the soul of the nation. When Queen Victoria died an old chief said to me, "Is she really dead; we always thought of her as a goddess who could never die. When I was a boy my father told me of her and lo! I am old and near the grave now, yet all my life have I heard of her power and might, and we said to ourselves death can never claim that divine lady and she will live for ever!" This extreme regard for the chiefly office is characteristic of the Polynesian races. I read in the reminiscences of one of the Australian magistrates that in the riots on the gold diggings in the middle of the last century about the mining licences there were eighty Maoris at Bendigo. They rallied round the resident magistrate and told him that they were true men of Queen Victoria, and if there was going to be any trouble they were on his side. Notwithstanding this deep regard for authority, the Fijian cannot help indulging in his love of humour and fun. Sir William Des Vœux, the second of our Governors, was held by the native in the greatest regard and awe. He was a fine, handsome man, and maintained a certain amount of state, a factor which counts for a lot in dealing with primitive races. Once when he was *en grande tenue*, in full Windsor uniform, a Fijian lady, gasping with admiration, was heard to say, "Oh! look at the Governor, is he not beautiful; what lovely breeches; he is just like a splendid fighting cock!" Yet on one occasion a lot of little boys poked fun at him. He was on a visit to the royal city of Mbau, which is situated on a small islet, the houses clustered round small grassy squares and intersected by narrow paths and wynds. It is kept scrupulously clean and neat and one can walk about without encountering anything offensive. Sir William in the cool of the evening was sauntering about to stretch his legs and get fresh air. The naughty little boys had found out that he was shortsighted and very polite, and always took his hat off when the people greeted him with the *tama*. So a number of them laid in wait for him and gave

the loudest *tama* they were capable of. It was repaid with a sweeping and courteous bow. Then the young rascals took a short cut to the next turning and repeated their trick, and followed him about from place to place with the same game until he had finished his exercise.

To use familiar slang it was a tremendous piece of cheek, and could only have been practised on a shortsighted man and one unacquainted with native customs. In Mbau, Rewa and the chief southern districts the compliment of the *tama* is not paid after midday and never by children such as those who followed the Governor about. Its observance is much governed by local tradition and varies a good deal in the different districts.

The first time I went over to hold a Provincial Council in Tholo East, after I had become the full-blown Commissioner there, the night before it a deputation of the elders came to instruct me as to etiquette. I was not to enter the Council House until all the notabilities and representatives of the province had assembled. Then I was to appear and be acclaimed by the *tama*. Then the head native minister, who would be waiting in attendance, would say a short prayer, which was to be followed by a ceremonious drinking of *kava* or *yangona*, rendered with full musical honours by the old time chants handed down from bygone generations.

After having learnt their part of the education, I had to teach mine, which was principally to try and prevent everybody from all speaking together at one and the same time. However, with patience and perseverance I succeeded after many years in getting a regular order of procedure observed. To compare great things with small the Commissioner opened with a speech, which may be likened unto that from the throne upon the opening of our own Parliament. One of the leading chiefs would *uli* this, or accept it, in the name of the assembly, after which all present acclaimed it by a measured clapping of hands. The names of the different districts had previously been written on slips of paper which were folded up and shuffled. The *Mbuli*, or head man, of the district whose slip was first drawn would then make his report. It was done in this fashion to prevent the people of a district giving themselves airs of precedence through their chief having been chosen by the Commissioner to speak first, and it was ostentatiously shown that it was drawn for by lots. The *Mbuli* would state that the mortality records, the births, deaths and marriages were duly and properly kept, and give the figures. He would also give the condition of the roads, crops, etc. The difficulty was when a man was speaking to keep bursting patriots from breaking in with their own pet projects. But after a while it was established



as a rule that whilst we were discussing the affairs of a particular district the debate should be confined to that area, and that anyone who had a grievance or a scheme in connection with it could air it then. Before I left we had quite established a regular small parliamentary procedure.

This little form of Home Rule was a great safety valve, and afforded opportunities of explaining away grievances and of giving the people the chance of letting off steam. The holding of these Councils was always an anxious time, and I felt very thankful when they were over and that I had managed to steer clear of the rocks. At the same time I generally got a good deal of quiet amusement from them. Finance, of course, was a thorny subject. We had the right to levy annually a rate from each able-bodied man with which to pay the village police, the district scribes and office expenses. Two shillings was the assessment made in the beginning, and any endeavour to increase it afterwards was denounced as unconstitutional. At nearly every Council some ardent patriot would get up and say that the village police and the native clerical staff were shamefully and inadequately paid and that their emoluments should be increased. Everybody agreed as to this, but I could not get them to understand that if they granted enhanced pay they would also have to provide for it by contributing a much larger rate. No, every man had paid two shillings; it was an enormous sum when collected together and duly lodged in the *kato ni yasana* (provincial cash-box) and a never-failing source of wealth, and it must suffice for everything. It was a yearly wrestle, and at one meeting I said I was tired of explaining the matter to them, and after once more going over the ground of how *Tui Veretania* (the King of Britain) when he wanted money with which to carry on the Government appealed to his faithful Commons, I retired, leaving the matter in the hands of a committee which we had appointed to deal with it. Their decision was subsequently reported by a hoary-headed old sinner, who had a great knowledge of the local jails. He addressed me thus: "Sir, I altogether object to paying extra taxes to increase the pay of the man who takes me to jail!"

The people of the Tholo North Province were very docile, but not so vigorous and intelligent as those of Tholo East. The latter were my free and independent electors and usually heckled me when we met in council. But they were good men and true, and what resolutions they passed in the way of voluntary road-making, house-building for Government purposes, etc., they adhered to. I was keenly zealous for the welfare of the people, and sometimes in my

impatience I was tempted to play the part of the beneficent despot. On such occasions I hardly prevailed; the matter might be for the general good, but it had been ordered arbitrarily without the sanction of the faithful Commons.

Sir George O'Brien, who was our Governor from 1897 to 1902, was a capable and energetic administrator and a great financier. He it was who discovered that Fiji was not the poor Colony it had hitherto been supposed to be, and that there were large funds available, locked up somewhat obscurely. We in the service looked upon him as a great benefactor, as through him we were at last able to get a little money for road-making, transport, etc. But we quite forgot that it was through Sir John Thurston, his predecessor, we had saved money. He came to the helm in 1888, when through the German sugar bounties the Colony was at its last gasp. His careful economies pulled us round, and after his regime of nine years we became a flourishing community.

Personally I feel under many obligations to Sir George O'Brien, but it seems to me, now many years afterwards and after much reflection, that he did not allow for public sentiment, either British or Fijian. He was great on sanitary reforms and the increased welfare of the natives. It had always been a reproach that the Fijians were slowly dying out, and he was determined that that should cease. The mortality was principally amongst the infant population, due largely to defective nutrition. So we in charge of districts were ordered to arrange that the people should buy cows and that the women should be instructed in the use of feeding-bottles. In a previous chapter it has been mentioned how they revolted. For a while we managed to keep the cows going and the milk distributed, but it meant too steady and constant application, altogether out of keeping with the Fijian bent. This phase of the reforms died out from sheer fatigue on our part to keep it going. The other measures prevailed in time to a fair extent, and whether owing to them or not the vital statistics now show a slight increase of births over deaths.

We were all infected with the Governor's enthusiasm, and between us we worried the natives pretty considerably and the reforms got on their nerves. One of my predecessors' favourite stories was that when he had won over the people of his province and had persuaded them to abjure cannibalism and range themselves, they stipulated that nothing should be done to startle them, and the authorities should go slow. Under the new régime we were daily stirring them up and causing resentment. Not to any very serious extent, but when Sir George left us I summed up the situation thus: Sir John

Thurston had left the people actively loyal, and his successor passively disloyal.

In 1900 the great Mr. Seddon, the Premier of New Zealand, made a voyage to the South Seas in one of the Dominion yachts. Has it not been recorded in a volume issued by the official Press, illustrated by many beautiful photographs all done at the public charge, regardless of expense? Not only did he visit the islands which come under the sway of New Zealand, but also Tonga and Fiji. Our white community was then very dissatisfied with the form of government, that of a Crown Colony of a severe type. Whether it emanated from Mr. Seddon or from the inhabitants I do not know, but the question of the annexation of Fiji to New Zealand was raised at that time. The illustrious visitor was entertained at a public dinner, at the conclusion of which his enthusiastic hosts took the horses out of his carriage and dragged it to the wharf, where the boat was lying in which he returned to the yacht.

Shortly afterwards Sir George O'Brien opened a hospital built on the Lower Rewa for native use. There was a great gathering with the usual drinking of *yangona* and much feasting *more Fijiansi*, at which the Governor made a speech. In it he warned the people that under New Zealand, in all probability their proprietary rights in their lands would not be so scrupulously respected as it had been under the direct government of the Crown. It was an injudicious speech and brought a swarm of hornets about the Governor's devoted head in the shape of counter-attacks from the local disaffected and fiery rejoinders from the Great Dick, as the New Zealand Premier was familiarly known. He was just then in the zenith of his popularity, both with his own people and at home. It was the time of our fiercest stress in South Africa, and New Zealand was sending contingents, splendidly mounted and equipped, to the scene of action, and Mr. Seddon, the dynamo that set them going, carried too many guns for Sir George.

The consequences of the speech did not become immediately evident, and the Governor continued his campaign. A circular was issued to the Commissioners directing them to lay the matter before their respective Provincial Councils and ascertain the views of the natives. It was shortly before I had arranged to hold the annual meetings in Tholo North and Tholo East. The former was the first to assemble and I duly carried out my instructions. The people passed a resolution stating their confidence in the present form of government, disclaimed any desire of joining New Zealand, and altogether were demonstratively loyal and affectionate.

Then I went over to Tholo East for the Council there. The night before it met, one of my sage mentors, Simon, the chief of the clan known as the Children of the Hills, who many and many a time by his wise advice had helped me in tangled native customs, came to my quarters. His object was to prepare me for a rebuff. He said, "You are going to be disappointed to-morrow, sir; the people are going to vote for annexation to New Zealand. The young men have so determined, and we elders as their spokesmen will have to vote in accordance with their wishes. I do not want to do so myself, but I shall have to go with the crowd. Why has the Government given this chance to our youths? They always have a grievance of some sort or other and perpetually grumble. But it is like a wind that comes and blows away and shortly gets forgotten altogether. But now an opportunity of flouting you has been given and they will avail themselves of it."

Our Council that year was held at Mburenitu, the head village of the Sautoka clan, on the Wainimbuka. As predicted by Simon all the head men voted for annexation to New Zealand, with the exception of the chief of the Sautoka, who was my host. By arrangement with his brother peers he ranged himself on my side, as I was his guest, and it was but courteous to give me all hospitality. I felt hurt, but after the resolution had been duly recorded the rest of the business on the agenda was satisfactorily got through.

There certainly was about that time a good deal of unrest and dissatisfaction. It would be too long to give the causes in detail, but the principal reason was the undue zeal with which sanitary reforms were pressed. Pork and the rearing of pigs for its production is one of the chief joys of Fijian life. Mr. Carew had instituted a system whereby the swine were kept out of the villages, but sufficiently close to be accessible, by enclosing a considerable piece of land immediately adjacent. Prior to Sir George O'Brien's period we had rather prided ourselves on the neatness and cleanliness of the Tholo East villages. But it was not good enough for the new reformers. An order was issued that all pigs must be kept in sties some distance away. In disgust the people slaughtered the bulk of their animals, and consequently very considerably diminished their supply of flesh food. I ventured to remonstrate and say that I thought the evils arising from the want of it would outweigh any sanitary advantages derived from the banishment of the unclean beasts. I said, also, that interfering with the pigs was tantamount in England to robbing a poor man of his beer. It was just about the time of the scandal at home of the adulteration with arsenic of the national



drink. The Commissioner for Native Affairs, who was a courtier, made a marginal note to my report intended to be funny, to the effect that native pork might be reckoned in the same category as arsenical beer. The Governor capped it by congratulating him on his *bon mot*. So all that I got for attempting to set forth the popular cause was a snubbing. Just before I submitted my view of the question I heard two old Fijians discussing it. "Pigs," said one, "whoever sees a fat pig now? They are ashen-coloured, lean and gaunt." "What can you expect," replied the other, "with the Government poking their nose into everything? How can you get a fat pig if he is not kept close by where daily you can give him the household refuse? And now he is banished far away into the bush."

The next Governor had not sanitation as his hobby, and although all reforms were maintained as far as possible they were not pressed with such red-hot zeal, and *festina lente* once more became the order of the day, and with it the natives recovered their equanimity and good nature.

Sir Arthur Gordon, our first Governor, instituted our small system of Home Rule, which was quite in accordance with ancient Fijian polity. Although the natives have only minor legislative powers, such as they possess have tended to keep them quiet and contented.

For the purpose of native administration there are seventeen provinces in Fiji. Some are presided over by white Commissioners and some by *Roko Tui* or native Lieutenant-Governors. The provinces are subdivided into districts controlled by *Mbuli* or native head men. These latter hold their councils every two or three months and forward the minutes to the head of the province, which keeps him in touch with even the smallest details of local affairs. Then annually the Provincial Council meets, the proceedings being duly reported to the Governor, and it is the vehicle by which he is kept informed of native opinion and of those things which they consider to be of pressing importance; in fact, the burning questions of the moment.

It has been the fashion of the colonists and even of many of the officials to regard these little local parliaments as huge jokes, but it is probably they which have kept the Fijians so loyal. I was going to say contented and loyal, but then, who ever is the former? As my friend Simon of the Children of the Hills said, there is always a wind ruffling the surface, and his countrymen, like ourselves, are born grumblers.

There is always much feasting, merrymaking, drinking of *yangona* and performances of elaborate dances at the meetings of the Provincial



Councils. Consequently they are much looked forward to. They are expensive, but that item is overcome in our happy-go-lucky, communal way. At each annual meeting it is arranged that such and such districts shall prepare the food and lodgings required for the next, and thus the venue is shifted all over the Province and considerable intervals occur before it is held in the same place again. No ready money is required ; it is simply a matter of growing sufficient quantities of yams, *dalo* and *yangona*, this latter being the native equivalent for our beer and whisky. Pigs, too, have to be bred to provide that which is represented in England by the roast beef. All this stimulates industry and tends to the general welfare.

Feasting and the merrymaking appeal much more to the Fijians than legislating. The Councils used to drag along for weeks, and the old minute books frequently bore this entry : "The Council now adjourns for feasting and dancing." Gradually economic pressure cut down the time to a couple of days, and the Commissioners ruthlessly stuck to necessary business. But one cannot work all the time, and there must be intervals for rest and food. The latter is generally ushered in and presented to the accompaniment of stately dances, to the music of native orchestras. So, still, the country people anticipate a good deal of fun when the Councils meet.

When the papers reached us and we used to read of the stress and turmoil of the Irish Home Rule question in the days of Parnell, I used to think what a pity our Fijian model could not be adapted for the distressful country. Why not have councils in each county with potheen instead of *yangona*, the Fijian national drink, and potatoes for yams. As for My Lord the Pig, is he not admired and loved in both countries? Dancing, too, is in the bones of each people, and much steam and discontent can be blown off by vigorous exercise. Why not have little local parliaments all over Ireland where the earnest-minded and the patriots could ease their souls by a plentiful flow of declamation, and the frivolous kill dull care by a little feasting and merrymaking ?

## CHAPTER XVI

### Fijian Women

**C**HERCHEZ *la femme* holds good for all the world, and the first trouble to cross my path arose from my ignorance of the Fijian ideas on the subject. It occurred at the very first of our little local parliaments at which I was called to preside. It was held at Waimbasang-a (Branching Waters) where the river of the Great Falls joins the Wainimala in Lomai Tholo, in the very heart of Viti Levu. I had got through the Provincial Council all right and was pluming myself over it. It was a regular family gathering, and we had all behaved affectionately and nicely to each other. It was in December, the Fijian summer, and blazing hot. The neat little *Mbure* specially built for me stood on the little promontory overhanging the meeting of the two rivers. These rapid mountain streams splashing and foaming over the rocks below gave a pleasant sense of freshness and coolness. After a long, hot day in the Council House where everybody smoked (I always encouraged the use of tobacco then, as it tended to calm the nerves of my excitable friends), the atmosphere becoming somewhat spicy. I had retired for a while to the quiet of my little *Mbure*. But the *Mbulis* of the different districts followed me thither to have some little informal conversation ere we all sought our couches. Not long before I had read Burnaby's *Ride to Khiva*, where a box of Cockle's pills is recommended as part of the travelling equipment in far-away parts. One was included in mine, and it stood on the table in my quarters when my patriarchal friends came to visit me. After the long, hot day and the vitiated state of the air in the Council House I suspected my liver to be out of order, and thought that I would try Burnaby's prescription. My visitors immediately descried the little box and asked what it was. I opened it, showed the contents and added that it was medicine. One of the more enlightened said, "Oh, yes, the *vunikau* (berries) of the white gentlemen are very efficacious." They all smiled, looked at each other and said if I were going to take some they would like to do so also, and in no time the

box was emptied. I am just mentioning this to show upon what extremely friendly and familiar terms we were ere the bomb fell which was to break up and rupture our kindly relations.

Then followed the Provincial Court, the general jail delivery which takes place every three months. The last evening arrived and we were all ready to depart on the morrow when a young man and a girl came to my quarters. The former told me that he was a stranger from the Lower Rewa and was a Wesleyan native teacher assigned to one of our hill villages, to which the girl belonged. They were in love with each other and desired to get married, but could not as the native Stipendiary Magistrate refused to give them the necessary licence. Before a minister of religion or a registrar can perform the wedding ceremony such document must be produced from the native legal officer of the district in which the parties reside. The European magistrates cannot issue them but were registrars, and could perform marriages between Fijians after the issue of a licence aforesaid. It was a recourse for the people when the religious authorities refused to solemnise the ceremony from reasons of dogma. In such instances I have had to officiate, but I never, if I could possibly help it, interfered with the rights of the Church.

I sent a message round to my native colleague to ask that he would come and see me. He came and said, yes, it was quite true he had refused to give the couple a licence. I asked him why; but he, dear, good, muddle-headed old chap, could give no reason. He was one of those who think slowly, but I had not then known him six months, and was unacquainted with his disposition. I asked him what the *Lawa Eso*, as the Native Regulations are called, provided, and he handed me his copy of them. There I saw that it was distinctly enacted that women were free to marry whom they pleased, and that no obstacle was to be placed in their way. I therefore told my colleague that the law was quite clear, and directed that the licence should be issued.

I think that secretly the native magistrate was greatly relieved. He was a devout Wesleyan and a lay preacher, hand in glove with the native Wesleyan minister, and they both resided at Narokorokoyawa, the chief village of Noemalu, about three miles further up the Wainimala from where we were holding the Council. He was desirous that the teacher should wed the maiden, but fearful of the hubbub it would create in the clans of the lady and her fiancé, to whom she had been promised from her babyhood for a valuable consideration. So I was left to cut the Gordian knot.

Early the next morning Vuthang-o, the *Buli* of Muaira, in whose



FILLING THE WATER POTS.

Hill women with bamboos, emblematic of their sex, drawing water from the river.





district we were, came into my quarters with a gloomy and careworn aspect and bluntly told me I had set his people by the ears, and had taken away one of their girls and given her to a stranger. Then, too, I had robbed the clan of the young man to whom she had been contracted, and generally there was the mischief to pay, the aggrieved parties saying they would take refuge in some other province where I was not the magistrate. I consoled him to the best of my ability, but during my talk fire was added to the fuel by the entry of a man with a letter in a large official envelope prominently marked "O.H.M.S." It was the resignation of Joram, the District Scribe, and the *Mbuli's* right-hand man. He belonged to one of the injured clans; the iron had entered into his soul and he had shut himself up in his *Mbure*, where he was sulking like Achilles after the loss of Briseis. I had indeed raised a hornet's nest. After much talking I departed, thinking that I had pacified all parties without going back on my decision.

The happy couple went up to Narokorokoyawa and were duly made one by the native minister. Each month the native magistrate sent his Court returns to me for revision. This was done to guard against illegal sentences. Shortly after this little storm I noticed in them that he had condemned a number of girls to terms of imprisonment and had them incarcerated at his own village, an altogether illegal proceeding. I demanded an explanation, and he replied that the women at Waimbasang-a had lampooned him in a *meke* or song about the teacher and the girl. His scribe wrote the song out and sent it to me. It was distinctly libellous, and, although I was responsible for the decision, his countrywomen blamed *the Native Magistrate*, probably because I was too high game to fly at.

I could only review; the power of reversion lay with the Resident Commissioner. I sent the District Court sheets in to him. As the law was on my side, my decision could not be upset; besides that, the couple were married. But Mr. Carew took me roundly to task for interfering with custom, and quoted the fool who rushed in where angels feared to tread. It made me think of the Articles of War that Mr. Midshipman Easy purchased from the captain's clerk with his old toothbrush. Although all in His Majesty's fleet were supposed to be conformable to them, Mr. Easy did not know that they were abrogated by the thousand and one circulars from My Lords of the Admiralty. The Native Regulations were supposed to be law, but one was expected not to be too much governed by them when they interfered unduly with native sentiment. The Resident Commissioner was profoundly affected by that, and told me plainly that as

regarded native affairs I was a radical, although the opposite in our own politics.

Before I left the Colony public opinion had completely come round, and, to make use of a modern catchword, women were accorded the right of self-determination, and no more pressure was brought upon them than is done with ourselves when relatives endeavour to bring about desirable matches. The youth of both sexes adopted our ways: girls were courted, and engagement rings became the fashion.

According to Fijian polity women were but chattels, not so valuable as pigs, as I endeavoured to show in the opening chapter. But they were so only in theory; in actual practice, from the liveliness and sprightliness of their dispositions, they had to be seriously reckoned with. Seeing the hard work that Fijian women do, I mean those of the same social degree as our poor working people, I used to think how sad their lot was. I had left England when I was very young and, until I returned in my old age, I did not comprehend the hopeless and incessant drudgery of our own poor women. In Fiji there is always abundance of food, and extreme poverty is unknown, and there is plenty of leisure for play and recreation. Man is certainly the Lord of Creation, but in the hill country he had to do his share of the daily tasks. A typical sight is the man striding ahead with the baby pick-a-back, and the women following with a heavy back-load of firewood, yams and *dalo*. It is recognised as a fair division of labour that whilst the woman is occupied with domestic details the husband looks after the children. It was quite a common thing in the Courts to hear cross cases of assault and battery between married couples, and they nearly all had striking family resemblances. The man would be in the upper part of the house, where the sleeping accommodation is, nursing the baby, and the woman in the lower end doing the cooking, when the quarrel arose. When the husband got sufficiently into a rage he would seize hold of a *kali* (wooden pillow) and hurl it at his wife, and she would retaliate by flinging billets of firewood at him. Then he would rush down to the fireplace to pummel her; she would probably seize a firestick and brand him, and both would appear in Court each bearing their distinctive marks. It was almost as usual as the letter in our modern divorce cases giving the name of the hotel where the respondent and co-respondent had stayed, sarcastically alluded to by the judges as being of "common form," a legal term for a document filed as a matter of course.

Fijian women when young are arrant coquettes, full of fun and

strong willed. Frequently rather than be driven into distasteful matches they would resort to suicide. Taking them all round, they are good and patient, and develop into exemplary housewives. They keep their houses neat and clean, and there is no squalor. The Fijians had one filthy habit—that of lifting up their pretty, clean mats to spit under them, but we have nearly broken them of this. I never felt any repugnance to taking up my quarters in the native villages, which the exigencies of my work compelled me to do. On the contrary, after the long, hot rides the picturesque houses, with their nicely matted, cool interiors, always looked most inviting. Then the food was tastefully brought in clean white baskets lined with fresh green leaves, and there were always bowls of water with which to cleanse one's hands. As fingers had to be used, unless one brought knives and forks, these latter were very welcome.

The mats which carpet the houses, the curtains of bark cloth which adorn the sleeping quarters, the baskets to contain food and the earthenware bowls and cooking utensils are all the products of female hands. The men build the houses and conjointly with the women grow the crops and catch the fish which accompany the yams and *dalo*, the mainstays of Fijian existence. The natives aver that the latter will only flourish under female care, and in the old phallic worship that once prevailed it was symbolical of their sex, as the yam was that of the male. Before the advent of British rule fighting was the principal occupation of the men, and whilst they were on the war-trail agricultural occupations had to be carried on by the women, and under their capable organisation the tribe was kept in food. Casual visitors and unobservant long-residents consider Fijian women as downtrodden and unhappy, but they themselves do not think so. When we used to try and get their work eased off and say that the men should do more, they would reply that it was a pleasure to help their husbands and boys.

Fijian women, like our own, are much more devout and religious than the men, and are the mainstay of the Wesleyan Church. In the old cannibal days they were very instrumental in influencing their male relatives in embracing the new faith. One reads in the Bible of the devout and honourable women ministering to the wants of the saints, and their repetitions are to be found in Fiji, helping in the church work and supplementing the food and comforts of the village pastors.

Polygamy used to be the order of the day, but it has from very natural reasons completely died out. The powerful chiefs of the coastal districts maintained large harems, but their brothers of the

hill tribes seldom had more than four wives, and it was only a few comparatively that could boast of that number. When we assumed the sovereignty we recognised as legal wives all that men then had, but they were not to add to them. In 1884, the year I went to Tholo, ten years after that event, most of the elderly men had several wives, but when I left in 1910 nobody had more than one. Public opinion was opposed to polygamy, from the fact that the usual state of Fiji was the reverse of that of most other countries in that the men exceeded the women in numbers. Under the old native tyranny, which permitted men of influence to have a superabundance of wives, the poorer class had to go without. The new freedom allowed liberty of thought and speech, and the young men of the rising generation used to come to me and ask why certain of the elders had more than one wife, whilst some had to go without. The Wesleyan Mission was uncompromising, too, in its opposition. No convert could be baptised and become a communicant until he had abjured all but the one woman to whom he had to be joined in holy matrimony. It was no case of women being turned adrift to destitution and want; men were waiting, only too glad to marry them, and the abolition of polygamy, fortunately for our British peace and prestige, tended to a happy condition of affairs. The right of self-determination has elevated the status of women, and those of Fiji have now in every whit the advantages of their white sisters.

Happily, too, there was a good feeling between the women of the two races, and in Suva the wives of the high native officials who were quartered there frequently dropped in for tea with their English friends. My mother was very popular with them, and at such times as I was at home it used to fall to my lot to talk to and entertain them. Generally we used to form a small knot in the lower end of the deep verandah, and our talks often gave me sidelights on native thought. These *marama* (ladies) mostly belonged to the coast tribes, and at home would preside over large establishments and superintend the plaiting of mats, making of bark cloth, fishing and the maintenance of the food supply. Knowing that they could not pursue these avocations in a European community, I one day asked them how they managed to pass away the time. After a short silence, Andi (title preceding a name, equal to our Lady) Senimili, a grand-daughter of King Thakombau and the wife of one of the native officers of the A.N.C., slowly replied, as if deeply pondering her words: "Oh! ah! yes; there is certainly not much for us to do, but we call upon each other and take tea together, and then there is always the washing." Washing clothes, I must explain, amounts to almost a passion



with South Sea ladies. Mine has been done by some of the members of the bluest-blooded families, and I have read in Tahitian history that the proud Queen Pomare used to condescend to get-up the linen of the officers of the men-of-war calling in at Papeete, the chief port of that happy island. In Levuka, the ancient capital of Fiji before the seat of Government was shifted to Suva, there was a colony of Samoans who pretty well monopolised the washing trade. It was also the rendezvous for a considerable number of German traders. When Samoa was annexed by the Kaiser in 1900 (it was our sop to keep him quiet during the throes of the Boer War), it was not long before friction arose there with the natives. The Samoan ladies at Levuka, to emphasise their view of the matter, promptly boycotted the Germans and refused further to minister to their wants.

Whilst I was at Vunindawa the wife of my friend Ratu Jona, the native minister, did my washing, and with the money she made asked me to buy her a sewing-machine in Suva. I did so and got a Singer, which became the bane of my life. I ought to have known better, as one of the cautions that the Resident Commissioner gave me when I joined his staff was : "Never give a native a kerosene lamp. If you do, whenever the owner breaks a glass, wants a new wick or more oil he will think that he has the right to come upon you for them." I found that the sewing-machine was similarly regarded. Whenever anything went wrong with it, I was appealed to. I am no mechanician, and the demands that were made upon me helped to make my hair grey and my head prematurely bald. Something was always going wrong with the shuttle, which the owner called *velovelo*, the Fijian for boat, from its supposed resemblance to that article. The *vuli*, i.e. the students attached to her husband's Mission School, frequently dropped in to say the *velovelo* was out of gear and could I just slip over and put it right, and I did not obtain relief from this expected duty until I was sent to another province.

Apropos of the Resident Commissioner and his advice, he had another story which, as it is about a lady and a lamp, may, I think, be told here. He was at Mbau, the ancient native capital, and was talking to the Lady Mary, the wife of the Chief of the Royal Fishermen, a highly important and powerful clan, who like our Marines were soldiers and sailors too, as they were warriors in addition to their ordinary calling. She pointed to her husband in another part of the house talking to a group of men. "Look at him," she said ; "he and some others are talking of buying a cutter, and he can't give me sixpence to buy a lamp glass with !"



One day when I was talking to a group of native ladies at my mother's I saw them eyeing earnestly a pretty Scotch girl but lately arrived, who with her other attractions had golden hair. Following their glances, I said, "She is very pretty, is she not? and I adore golden hair." "Oh!" replied Andi Mereone, turning up her nose, "golden hair, the very easiest thing in the world to get; it is only a matter of sufficiently washing it with coral lime. What is really difficult is to have good black hair." Here followed a dissertation on native cosmetics too lengthy to be repeated; but something should be said about coral lime. If possible, the hair should be plastered with it at least once a week. Not only is it a very sanitary measure, but, followed by a wash of wild lemon juice, a beautiful glittering, golden hue is imparted to the hair. When I went home with a detachment of the A.N.C. for King Edward's coronation we took with us a large sack of coral lime, and I bought lemons at the different ports at which we called. I was frequently asked how it was my men had such beautiful golden hair, and often their fuzzy mops were taken for busbies or some other artificial head-dress.

Andi Mereone was the lady who compared the Governor to a fine game-cock, and she was rather a wit in her own way. She told one of my sisters one day that a mutual acquaintance, a Mrs. So-and-so, had called upon her and had bored her excessively by cross-examining her upon her relationship to the Fijian royal family. "But," said Mereone, "I did not retaliate by asking her in what degree she stood to Queen Victoria." We had in those days an elderly official whose disposition was affectionate, and who was fond of kissing. The Lady Marion, discussing his proclivity, one day said to me, "Who wants to be kissed by an old man?"

I have wandered away from the hill girls in trying to portray the sex, but in the main they are all alike. Our mountain maidens had their wit too.

When I went on circuit the native magistrates and clerks of the peace did the preliminary work and drew up the informations by which the cases were presented to me. At one of the Provincial Courts I found the following indictment: "Makalini informs the undersigned magistrate that Koli at Waitambu was unlawfully guilty of slander."

Made before me—"Ka."

Native Stipendiary Magistrate for the Province of Tholo East.

This was meagre, but at the time we were proud at having gently led our native officials in the way of court procedure and of getting from them anything in the form of a written indictment. However,

the opening witness for the plaintiff disclosed the gist of the affair. He deposed that he was the village constable of Mbotenaulu, to which place Makalini also belonged, and that he had met the accused at Waitambu on the main highway. Accosting him he inquired what he was doing there. "Oh! coming back from the jail at Vunindawa," was the reply. "And what were you there for?" "The usual thing of course, a woman, but it is not going to happen again." Here followed some reflections on the sex, which are unprintable.

The constable when he returned home in the evening repeated the conversation and Makalini overheard him. She fired with indignation at the aspersions upon her sex, went up immediately to Narokorokoyawa and lodged a complaint before the Native Stipendiary Magistrate accusing Koli of slander. When the matter came up before me in the Provincial Court I was suffering from a legal mind. I had just passed my examination and been called to the Bar. I thought that in a case of slander special damage must be proved. Makalini had suffered none and the reflection was one against the sex generally and not upon her individually. So the case was dismissed. Viewing it now historically after a lapse of thirty years and in conjunction with native tradition and law we ought to have given the accused a month's hard labour on the roads. That would have met the Fijian idea of justice, and made him useful to his country and to the roads also, which reminds me of the example in my old Latin Grammar : *Si facis ut patriæ sit idoneus utilis agris.*

## CHAPTER XVII

### Birth & Childhood

WITH the coast-people children derived their rank from their mother. It is said by the early writers that polygamy rendered this necessary, high chiefs having so many wives and concubines that it was absurd that all their offspring could take the rank of their sires, and that therefore the position of the mother regulated their children's status in society. This may have been one of the causes, but it would seem that at some far-distant period the descent was uterine, the offspring belonging altogether to the mother's family. In the Mathuata Province on the Island of Vanua Levu it still obtained in my time. There, when a child was born, it belonged to its mother's family, took their name and shared their lands. When the mother had ceased child-bearing, she returned home, her children, as they grew up, having preceded her, and beyond begetting them the father had little or nothing to say to them. With most of the other tribes, although the rank is derived from the mother, the children belong to the father's family.

This is the case with the Kai Tholo or hill people, as a rule the descent being agnatic, or through the father. One tribe actually recognises the right of primogeniture ; but even there in most of them a faint trace of the former influence of the maternal family may be perceived in the powers wielded by the mother's brother who, to all intents and purposes, exclusive of the father, directs and orders the future of a child. There are also instances in which the paternal family assumes sole control, but there, too, the child's future is more in the hands of the uncle than of its parent, and in this case it is the father's brother. This is in Mboubutho where the father's brother is called the *Tathuluvena* (literally " the child's brother ").

In Noemalu the *Gandinana* or maternal uncle has charge of the child, though otherwise he belongs to, and takes the name of, his father's family ; and it is this tribe which acknowledges the right of

primogeniture. The ceremonies which they practise at the birth of a child are most peculiar, and are as follows :

As soon as it becomes evident that a new member of the tribe may be expected preparations are made for its arrival. Stores of turmeric and piles of firewood are laid in. Miniature mats, which take the place of cradles and babies' clothes, are also prepared. When the woman begins to feel the pangs of confinement she sends for the midwife, and her female relatives assemble. The males of the family gather together in the *Mbure* or great communal hall where most of their life, when not planting, fishing or fighting, is spent. In older times a man hardly ever slept under the same roof as the woman ; that is quite a modern and Christian innovation. The great *Mbure* was, to all intents and purposes, what our clubs are. The men assembled to drink *kava* or what is more properly known in Fiji as *yangona* ; and also, as far as they were able or permitted, to keep an eye on the doings of the women, of whose behaviour they have the most profound distrust. They credit them with always endeavouring to evade maternity, and fear that the midwives may, under the pretence of the necessity of a surgical operation, unduly use the bamboo (their principal cutting instrument), and so damage the offspring. A man never knows but that at some time or other he may have seriously offended his wife or her relations, and this is the way, he conceives, in which they could best revenge themselves. To guard against anything like this, as far as possible, a man is placed outside the house where the confinement is going on. He squats under the eaves and listens untiringly to all that is going on inside, and he is expected to take a full and accurate account of all that he hears to his anxious principals at the *Mbure*. We may look at this waiting outside as a compromise. The women suffer that, but will not allow a man inside, and, in fact, on such occasions are as fussy and important as their white sisters. Should the expected arrival turn out to be a male, he is greeted with shouts of "*Mboro, mboro Taingwane*" (Anoint, anoint the male) ; if a girl, the women go into shrieks of laughter and roll about the mats in paroxysms of mirth at the ridiculousness of such an insignificant thing as a woman being born. The umbilical cord of a man is cut on a reed, a female's on a bamboo. The former is symbolical of the male organ and the power of penetration, whilst the bamboo is used for the woman as it is considered the emblem of receptivity and of household thrift. In it the water for household purposes is carried, being the Fijians' bucket ; with its sharp splinters yams and *dalo* and other articles of food are peeled and prepared. The women who most neatly prepares the vegetables,

so that they will look inviting as they repose in the green leaves with which she has lined her clean white basket, which takes the place of plates, is esteemed the better housewife and prized accordingly, and her skill is supposed to emanate from the virtue of the bamboo. When a boy is born he is laid on the grass underneath the mats in order that he may grow hardy and inured to the exigencies of outdoor life ; on no account must he be laid on the mats, or he will grow up weak and effeminate. On the other hand, a girl is at once placed on a mat that she may grow up skilled in mat plaiting and other feminine occupations. The umbilical cord is severed two or three inches from its junction with the navel. The portion severed, together with the after-birth, is delivered to the maternal uncle. Should the child in question belong to a fisher family (inland river fishing) he wraps it round a smooth stone and secretly dives and deposits it in a deep pool, which he must never divulge. This is to make the child grow up learned in the fisherman's art. Should, on the other hand, the family be one that goes in for woodcraft, the uncle must hide it, also secretly, in the top of some tall forest tree, so that the child may become a fearless climber and versed in all the learning of the forest. The portion of the umbilical cord that remains attached to the child is left alone until it falls off. The father then generally buries it and plants a coco-nut tree over it. None of the old hillmen know their age. I have sometimes in joke asked them for it. The one addressed would only smile politely and scratch his head. Then generally a by-sitter (in Fiji in all ceremonies, etc., the posture of respect is a sitting-down position) would laugh and say, "Oh, you had better go and ask the coco-nut at such-and-such a place."

The man stationed outside the house, having found out by the women's behaviour whether the child is a male or a female, goes off to the *Mbure* and announces the news. Immediately it is known some of the father's young relatives hasten to get the leaves and flowers of a fragrant shrub called the *mbua*, the Noemalu floral badge, with which to decorate the door-posts and lintels of the house. This is done as a sign of joy, and the men who do it are handsomely rewarded by the proud father.

Three days after the birth of a male, and four days after that of a female, it is bathed for the first time and named. The day before this ceremony the father and his friends go fishing for crayfish or fresh-water prawns, and for little blunt-headed soft fish called *vo* that are found among the grasses and sedges that fringe the banks of the mountain streams. The *vo* are preserved alive in water in bamboo buckets, whilst the prawns are cooked. On the day of the



ceremony the relations and friends collect together in the house where the child is. In their midst is a large wooden bowl of water in which are placed the little fish alive. Floating on the surface are four of the broad glossy leaves of the *mbua*, the tribal emblem (the ceremony is called the *vakasevu mbua* or first-fruits of the *mbua*). They are placed criss-cross heaped with powdered turmeric. The midwife then approaches with the child well daubed with turmeric reclining on a baby's little mat, over which is spread a piece of *malo* (bark cloth) and holds it over the bowl of water. The father and the male friends then make a circle round it, linking together their little fingers, and chant the following verse :

“Vua na mburu soka,  
Lala ngungu, i ye, yi !  
I ye ya ne,  
Vua na makita,  
Ka lala mbisa mbisa,  
I ye yi i ya ye E !”

(Then the child is dipped into the water)

“Tau tau ki wai, i ya ye,  
I ya ne !”  
Dip in the water, i ya ye,  
I ya ne.”

After the dipping of the child the piece of native cloth on which it reclined, stained deep with turmeric, used to be handed to the maternal uncle. He preserved it until the next fight took place, and then wore it as a head-dress. This, of course, was only in the case of a male child, and was done in the hope that, as the uncle bore himself valiantly in the fray, so would the child. My informant did not say what would happen in the case of cowardice. That does not appear to have been considered at all possible. The males of the party then returned to the *Mbure* and feasted, the prawns forming the *pièce de résistance*. The *vo* or live fish that were in the bowl were given to the midwife as her portion. After the men had eaten, a bowl of *yangona* was brewed, and they discussed what should be the name of the child. An ancestral name is always chosen, the Fijian hillmen being as proud of their descent as the Scottish highlanders. The name having been decided on, the maternal uncle goes to the house where the women are and cries out, “What ho, you women there within !” The women reply with two measured claps of the hands. The uncle then says, “The name of the child is *Ka*” (Fijian synonym for “So-and-so”). He is answered by a volley of loud claps, and thus the ceremony concludes.

In Mboumbutho the customs are, if anything, more peculiar than those just mentioned, and are, I think, worthy of a detailed account. In them the father's brother or paternal uncle is the important functionary. He is called the *Tathu luvena*, the child's brother. Those that I am about to recount are more properly observed at the birth of the eldest child (in most parts of Fiji the eldest is called the *Ulumatua*, in Mboumbutho, *Umani*. I would also premise that in my narrative I almost entirely use the precise words of my native informants).

In Mboumbutho, then, when the *Umani* is born, the first thing done is that an intimate and close friend of the father takes an enormous log of firewood to the house where the mother and child are. The log is called the *dé ni varathi levu*, or "the long stayer," and is meant to smoulder long and keep the mother and child warm. The father rewards the bringer with a handsome present. Then the father's brother, the *Tathu luvena* (either a younger brother, or if no younger brother, a younger cousin or son of a younger brother), proclaims that on the fourth day after the birth a great feast must be prepared. Pigs are selected and prawns, *vo* and eels are caught and preserved alive in a native bowl, either a clay dish or wooden vessel, if possible in a "*vesi*" *yangona* bowl. Then on the fourth day all the friends and relatives collect at the mother's house round about the bowl of water, in which are the live fish, etc. The mother then approaches with the child in her arms, and lays it on an outspread mat, and it is then smeared with turmeric. Two old men then station themselves at each end of the mat, one at the head and one at the foot, and each catches hold of an end. Then the people in the house sing :

1. "Yarambula, yarambula (Haul it alive),
2. Yarambula, yarambula,
3. Yarambula, yarambula,
4. Yarambula, yarambula."

And the old men drag the mat to and fro, and at the conclusion of the chant say : "*Ke Keirau tinimaka lingo ungoi, Ka mbula lingo na ungone ungoi mai muri*" or "We finish this up in the hope that this child in the future will flourish," to which all the rest of the elderly men present reply with "*Manai sa, e ndina*" or "May it be a true omen."

When this is finished four old men each take a corner of the mat on which the child is, and lift it up and carry it to the bowl of water, alongside of which was the father's brother, the *Tathu luvena*, in a

bowed-down position in the way in which Fijians and Orientals pray, i.e. with his head on the ground, presenting a broad back ; and then this song it sung :

“Enda laki sisili, kivei, kivei ?  
Ki tubei i Savusavu.  
Na vua ni kau thava ?  
Na vua ni Kalambisa.  
Ka Kala mbisa mbisa,  
Euru, euru tuva e.”

(“Let us go and bathe ; where, where ?  
At the source of the water-fall.  
The fruit of what tree ?  
The fruit of the Kalambisa.  
Our little Kalambisa  
Euru, euru, lay him down.”)

After this the mat with the child on it is lowered into the bowl of water. Then the child is lifted off it and placed upon the back of its uncle, the *Tathu luvena*, who is waiting alongside of the bowl in bowed-down position. There it is washed and cleansed of the turmeric, with which it had been anointed prior to being dragged to and fro on the mat by the old men. From this ceremony the *Tathu luvena* is also called *Naisilisili*, “The bathing place or bath.”

After the child has been washed it is put on a new mat called the *eva* (No. 4) probably from being used on the fourth day, and the mat which was lowered on to the bowl is put on one side. The child is simply laid on the ordinary matting of the house at this stage of the proceedings, and not carried in arms. As it lies so one of the elders who sits at the feet addresses it thus : “If thou art a child of war, move about ; if thou art a child of peace, lie still.” Then all the rest shout :

1. “Mbuli Yatha, mbuli yatha e.
  2. Teitei vaki, na yatha ni mama e.
  3. Toka ko Talesawavu, toka lelethia siro tu.”
- (“Make a name, make a name,  
Plant the name of this man,  
Let it be Talesawavu, happy let him be.”)

(Talesawavu is a sample name only ; whatever is to be the name of the child is to be then announced, such as Davelevu, Tamanivalu, etc.) When the above chant is done a man shouts out with a loud voice the name of the child, and the mother carries it forward in her arms and replies, “E,” and then claps her hands.

Then the feast is presented to those present at the washing of the child. An elderly relative of the child gets up and offers the food with the following speech: "It is nothing, O you chiefs, but a poor feast for the washing of your younger brother, your son that is here, a feast given that he may grow and flourish, a feast of the *moli*" (Shaddock tree), (tribal symbol of the Nasongo branch of the Mboumbutho tribe). Then the feast is divided, and when they have finished eating, the water in which the child was bathed is thrown outside together with the prawns, eels and fish that were alive in it. All the village children come and scramble for these, and it is supposed to be symbolical that the child will always be generous and share his food with his comrades. Then the bamboo in which the fish, etc., had been kept prior to being put into the bowl, is taken outside and planted in the ground, and the boys pelt it with stones. This is to make the child, when grown up, skilful in dodging missiles. The bamboo is called *nongeni lava* or basket of food.

The child then remains at home till it can stand up, when it is taken outside to the gardens. In the road is placed a bundle of reed leaves, done up in a package in the way fish are tied up in reed leaves. This is to make the child grow up a skilful fisherman. A few reed stalks are placed in the path a little further on, to make him strong at wood-cutting, more especially firewood, of which great quantities are required in the *Mbure*. Still further on are a few more reed stalks, which are strewn in the road for the child to pass over, to render him handy at fashioning spears. A slight, straight, strong sapling on the road is also selected by his young male relatives. The top of this is bent down to the ground like a bow. The father carries the child in his arms and passes it over the trunk of this tree from root to stem slowly, and then the young men let it fly back into its original position. This is called *kairinarina*, the flying or bounding tree. It is done to make the child a fearless tree-climber.

After this they return to the mother's house, where a big feast of yams and taro has been prepared, accompanied by a pig if the family is influential enough to afford it. The food when cooked is taken to the *Mbure*, and the child is taken there too for the first time, and as he enters it the old men say *levulevu* (presumably a prayer that the child may grow up strong and big; all utterances on such occasions are either pious wishes or curses).

Four days after this a little hole is dug in the road just long enough to hold the child. A reed is got and split in two and painted yellow with turmeric, and the pieces are bent and planted arch fashion over the hole, one at the head and one at the foot, after having previously

been passed along the stomach of the child. A man then sits at the head of the hole and another at the foot, and they pass the child to and fro under the reeds four times, saying as they do so, "*Tini maki, lingo ungoi, ka mbula na ngone*" or "We finish this up that the child may grow and flourish." On that day the child is thickly plastered with turmeric. Then large presents are made to the friends and relatives, and a feast is presented raw, which the relatives roast for themselves. After that the child remains at home ; if a male, until his beard begins to spring ; if a girl, till her breasts appear ; when it is time for the former to be invested with the *malo* or native cloth, and the latter with her *liku* or grass dress. Until then they go about naked.

When the time has arrived, the *Tathu luvena* invests the youth with the *malo* or garb of manhood, when it is considered no longer decent for him to go about unclothed. In doing so he says the following prayer over him : "This is the *sevu* (the first) of this child's *malo* ; let it be granted that he may be a *Moli* ; let it be a true omen ! ! ! !"

Four days after this the relatives assemble and take off the *malo*. They bring other *malo* as presents to the father and *Tathu luvena*, and say the same prayer for the youth that the latter has already said, as in the last paragraph.

Ten days after this the friends and relatives collect again to make a final investiture of the *malo*, after which there is no further ceremony in connection with its removal. The youth does as he likes about taking it off, etc. It is accompanied by solemn feasting and interchange of presents between the father and the members of his *mataqali* or clan.

It is presumed that a certain amount of the enemy, if possible, would be captured and clubbed on such an occasion. We know that that would happen with the coast chiefs, when first they put on the *masi*. My informant has kept carefully quiet on this point, it being the fashion nowadays to be ashamed of such barbarous customs. It may also not have been a rule in Tholo, where they were split into small independent bodies of free men, which would have rendered the procuring of victims difficult.

Then, after a while, comes the time for the circumcision of the young men, and the tattooing of the girls, most important ceremonies, prior to marriage to be dealt with in the next chapter.

This pretty well concludes the early life of young people in Tholo. Throughout Tholo many peculiar and distinct ceremonies are observed at the birth of children, those just recounted having been



selected as samples out of the many. It seems to be pretty universal amongst all the forest tribes that a ceremony should be gone through that will make the child a fearless climber and unsusceptible to giddiness. One way was, that the midwife took the child by the legs and whirled it round and round. Once in Tholo East I heard a charge of manslaughter arising from the death of a child, who, it was alleged, had been killed by this practice. At a sessions, too, of the Supreme Court, a case of this description was sent in from the inland portion of Tailevu, from one of the Wainimbuka villages I think ; both of these charges were dismissed. Another remedy against a child growing up with giddiness is for the female friends of the mother and the midwife to sit at short distances from one another, and to throw the child from one to the other, in fact play a sort of catch-ball with it.



#### OUR AMERICAN FRIENDS.

Henry Quincy Adams, the great, grandson of Washington's successor, and John La Farge, the celebrated New York artist, photographed by the Governor at Nasongo, 3rd July, 1861.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### Circumcision & Tattooing

**B**OTH circumcision and tattooing are difficult subjects, as they apply in either sex to "those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable." (1 Corinthians xii. 23.) More especially is this the case as regards the tattooing of the women. In some of the tribes there are outward and visible signs of the practice about the mouth and chin, but they are small in proportion to that which is concealed by the dress. Nevertheless, it is incumbent to say something about them in a description of Fijian life, as both were highly important religious ceremonies at which the novices were presented to the ancestral spirits, renamed and dedicated to the tribal service.

**CIRCUMCISION.**—Up to the time of my leaving Fiji in 1910 circumcision was still in vogue, but it was done privately, and, as far as I knew, without any ceremonies. For some years I had under my command a small body of the Armed Native Constabulary. The younger men every now and then would go mysteriously sick, and I used to find out that it was owing to circumcision. We generally had what I called a "barber-surgeon" in the force, one of the hereditary priestly caste, who in olden times was also the valet and physician of the chiefs, and he performed the operation after due consultation with the elder men. It was regarded as a matter of course, and I was not told about it. I did not like being deprived of the men thus put out of action temporarily, but it was one of the many customs to which one had to defer.

In Israel the rite takes place on the eighth day after birth, when the child is also named. Already in the last chapter it has been shown how the young Fijian was baptised and named on the third or fourth day. Circumcision did not take place until the age of puberty, when either a new name was assumed or that conferred at baptism was repeated and confirmed formally in the presence of the congregation. It has a certain amount of analogy to the Jewish ceremony of presenting boys to the congregation at the age of twelve and making

them "Sons of the Law," and somewhat equivalent to our confirmation.

The jealousy between the sexes at childbirth has been shown, and how the men endeavoured then to take precautions and arrange for the perpetuation of the ancestral names. But after all it was the women who generally scored. Although the children had the right to bear the names conferred by the fathers in council in the great *Mbure*, they usually were known by the pet endearment given by the mother's attendants at birth. One of my native clerks, a youth with a distinctly scholarly bent, and to whom I am indebted for having written out many of the legends and scraps of history from which I am endeavouring to compile my story, was given the ancestral name of *Tumbi*, but the women had already called him *Bembe*, which rather prettily means "Butterfly." Then when he was baptised he was christened Joseva, or as we say, Joseph. Being an observant youth he noticed that his white superiors generally had several names, so he used to write, when he signed himself in full, Joseva Bembe Tumbi. Our Governor at that time was Sir John Bates Thurston, who was in the habit of initialling his official minutes J.B.T., and he was very frequently alluded to in conversation as the great J.B.T. The youth Joseva often tidied up my papers, and he did not fail to notice that his own initials and those of the great Supreme Chief were identical. Gradually, instead of signing his name in full to documents he merely appended J.B.T. Imitation, as we know, is the sincerest flattery, and it is also a South Sea compliment to exchange names, as can be seen by reading Captain Cook's voyages. Joseva did not quite go to that length, but he adopted His Excellency's practice.

The pet names of the women were usually given for some peculiarity at birth. A youth whom I knew was called *Mbeka*, the Flying Fox, because his first cry reminded his mother's friends of the shrill utterances of that pretty little animal as it plunders the fruit trees at night. Before I left Fiji *Mbeka* had grown into a man, but was always known by that name, although in writing letters he signed in addition his baptismal and ancestral designations. Another acquaintance *Kalavo*, the Rat, was so styled because he was supposed to squeak like one when he was born. One of my boatmen was *Thelua*, which means hairy, as like his famous prototype Esau, he came into the world in that condition. Those who delight in *The Jungle Book* know how Mother Wolf adopted the hero of that story: "Keep him! Assuredly I will keep him. Lie still, little frog, O thou Mowgli—for Mowgli the Frog I will call thee." *Mboto* is the Fijian for it and a



popular name for fat little babies. Will it continue to be so? The poor frog has almost disappeared altogether in Viti Levu, though it may survive in the islands as yet unvisited by that scourge the devastating mongoose.

Christening now takes the place of the old custom of sprinkling the children with water from the *yangona* bowls in which swam the little river fish and freshwater prawns. In my days in Tholo East the people used to wait for the annual visitation of the head of the circuit, and I have seen the Reverend Dr. Langham baptising babies by the dozen in the church at Nakorovatu. As a rule Biblical names are given and the child is then known either by that or the pet endearment of the mother, the ancestral designation given by the father and his friends being used as a surname, for example, Joseva Bembe Tumbi, my old clerk.

Consequently change of name is no new thing to Fijians, and I have heard them sing with great gusto one of Sankey's hymns, a line of which is:

“Nongu na sala koula, nongu na yatha vou.”  
 (“Mine is the crown of gold, mine the new name.”)

Omitting the obscene and phallic parts of circumcision, some of the ceremonies practised are not without interest, particularly that of the new name in Noikoro. There and in those clans whose forbears were of Polynesian origin the novices were called *Yavou*, literally new men. In the purely aboriginal tribes they were known as *Kula*. The *Yavou*, during the time they were as the Shechemites, whom Simeon and Levi slew (Genesis xxxiv. 25), were attended by relatives who had already been initiated. These were called *Roko Tukutukani* (the noble elders).

In Noikoro the *Yavou* were circumcised publicly in the *Mbure* or Great Tribal Hall, which was also the Temple of the Gods as there dwelt the spirits of bygone ancestors. They were not visible to the mortal eye but manifested their presence by certain signs and portents to the priests. They haunted the dark spaces where the roof narrows at the meeting-place of the rafters with the ridge pole, and descended the chief *mbou* or king-post to partake of the libations, the first cupful of each brew of *yangona* which was poured out at the foot of this post.

The painful operation was performed in the presence of the whole tribe, men, women and children, and had to be borne without a murmur. Even when the inevitable wincing took place the youths were adjured to remember the tribe they belonged to and to com-

port themselves like men. From the chief king-post to the lower door, the common entrance, the women stretched in two ranks facing each other with a narrow lane between them. Facing each other thus they intoned the tribal chant used on these occasions, and as they sang they swept the space between them with their hands by a circular motion, thus removing every particle of dust and rubbish.

At the head of the lane at the foot of the principal king-post, with his forehead pressed against it and his back to the women, stood a veiled figure shrouded from top to toe in grass mats, one of the hereditary priests or seers. After each youth had been operated on and attended to by his sponsor he filed out by one of the doors at the upper or chief end of the *Mbure*, and passing round it re-entered by a lower door and crawled slowly up the lane of women to the veiled seer. Rising there to his feet he touched him lightly between the shoulders; the seer would then say, "What is your name?" The novice would mention that of his childhood. Then would be propounded, "What is the new name?" It would be given, and acclaimed by the congregation and the tribal chant would ring out, of which this is a verse:

"Pass the name, pass the name,  
Too long has he been Vunimbombo,  
Now he is called Telatha."

Sometimes as the youth gave his name to the shrouded figure at the post he would be told, "Ere you touched me your spirit came before and I felt his presence." That was an omen that the youth would not be long for this world.

When all had given their new names, the proceedings were closed by all in the *Mbure* chanting:

"Root of the Mbaka that hollow stands,  
Root of the Mbaka Nawa that hollow stands,  
Root of the Ara, le, e, e!  
Root of the Mbaka that hollow stands,  
Root of the Mbaka Nawa that hollow stands,  
Root of the Ara, le, e, e!"

The coco-nut and the old coco-nut,  
Let you and me climb up to the top,  
Your father, your son, to the very top,  
Konai ya, e.  
Stand up in the pass of the Vau,  
Let him be called Ra Matau,  
Nai e ya e."

*Mbaka* and *mbaka narwa* are species of the banyan tree, and floral emblems of the Noikoro tribe.

*Ra Matau* means the noble right hand and perhaps signifies that the son may now become the mainstay of the family and supersede his father. Generally in Polynesia parents sink into comparative obscurity when their children arrive at the age of discretion. Having done their duty they are replaced by their offspring. This custom rather puzzled Captain Cook and the early South Sea voyagers. Men in influential positions at their first visits were found, after an interval of some years, to have passed into the background, and it was discovered that they had been replaced by their children.

In Fiji, although this custom does not absolutely obtain, the identity of parents becomes to a certain extent merged in that of the children. In the coast villages a man and his wife get known as the father and mother of, say, Wasa (the Sea). Then they would be called Tamai Wasa and Tinai Wasa, the father and mother of Wasa. This is the converse of our habit of naming a man after his father, as Johnson, Thomson, etc. In Tholo men generally retained their own names, and also on the coast when they were of strong personality. Only the mediocre got called after their progeny.

The Noikoro practise complete circumcision as the Jews do, whilst some tribes only undergo the modified form known scientifically as incision. In olden times, those who did it entirely professed the greatest contempt for the partial method, and when they fought such people as had been so treated, they advanced to the battle reviling them as uncircumcised and unclean. So when the Bible was translated, the objurgations hurled by the Israelites at the uncircumcised Philistines were quite familiar cries.

The Noemalu, although closely related to the Noikoro, belong to those who undergo incision. Like the former the operation is performed publicly in the great tribal hall and partakes of the nature of an ordeal of manhood, to be borne bravely. But a further trial had to be endured on the fourth day when the novices purified themselves by washing in the river.

The youths then proceeded, swathed in *masi*, to the selected bathing-place, accompanied by their elders armed with clubs and spears. Public notice had been previously given that the *Yavou*, or newly circumcised, would bathe on a certain day at an appointed place, and thither flocked all the people of the neighbouring villages. They came armed with spears, short throwing-clubs, stones, and all kinds of missiles. Arrived at the water's edge, the *Yavou* divested themselves of their folds of *masi* which became the property of their

elders. They then went into the water, and had a long, delicious bath, and cleansed themselves of the accumulated filth of the previous four days. When they had finished, they made a simultaneous rush for home. This was a signal for the people of the neighbouring villages to chase them and hurl their missiles at them. The youths who successfully dodged these would become celebrated warriors, but he who got hit would not have a long career. However, to effect a diversion, their sponsors, who had come down armed for that purpose, threw themselves between the *Xavou* and the pursuers, with whom they had a sham fight. This lasted until the newly circumcised got home to their village, when time was called and the game was over, and pursuers and pursued all feasted together on food previously prepared by the novices' mothers. Though many were badly bruised and cut, all fed together to show that there was no animosity.

In the purely Melanesian or aboriginal tribe of Mboumbutho the novices are known as *Kula*. Their operation takes place in the heart of the forest and not in the big *Mbure*, and is performed by a skilled *Vuniwai* or professed surgeon, who doubtless would be one of the priestly class. It was done with many weird rites and incantations, accompanied with a fervent prayer that the youth would become a true graft of the tribal tree, the *moli*, one of the indigenous family of the citrus. When a number of aspirants were ready for the rite, their friends made a presentation of native property, consisting principally of warlike weapons, to the elders in the tribal *Mbure*. A consultation was then held and a day fixed for the ceremony, which was commenced by a sham fight between the *Tako* and the *Lavo*. Throughout inland Viti Levu these words signify the alternate generations. If a man is a *Tako* his son will be a *Lavo*, and should the latter have a child, then it becomes again a *Tako*. Certain magic virtues appertain to this relationship. They can render services to each other which would be of no effect if done for one of their own class or generations. The following example may help to explain this custom. I was out tracing the road to Mba, when a Mboumbutho man of my party got badly stung by the *salato*, or Fijian nettle, which causes the most intense irritation. Our guide, a Thawanisa youth, said to the sufferer, "I am a *Tako*; if you are a *Lavo* I can give you leaves which will relieve your pain; but if, like myself, you are a *Tako*, I can do no good."

I remember whilst resting once in a hill village, as I lay dozing on the mats there were two old men plaiting coco-nut fibre and making string used for ties in house building. Such used to be the occupation

of the industrious in their leisure hours, as knitting is with the women of our own race. As they made the string they yarned, addressing each other ceremoniously as *Tako* and *Lavo*. In the May number of *Na Mata*, 1919, there is an account by a native contributor of the renaming of boys and girls in olden time after they had undergone respectively the rites of circumcision and tattooing, as practised in the royal clan of Mbau. There he says the children were not named at birth, but one generation was called *Tuka* (grandfather) and the other *Tama* (father) if they were males, or *Mbuna* (grannie) and *Tinai* (mother) when women, and they were just called grannies or fathers and mothers, according to their generation, and were not positively named until circumcision or tattooing had taken place. The article is very casual and slipshod, but it helps to illustrate the custom of alternating generations. As a matter of fact, the same habit of the mothers' pet-names obtained as much in Mbau as elsewhere.

In Mboubutho instead of the purification in the river the *Kula* proceeded to some remote and lonely forest glen, dressed in fine flowing bark cloth which is called *masi kalou* or the dress of the gods. There they divested themselves of their finery and buried it in a deep hole. Never again, under the pain of death, were they to visit that spot. So strict is the rule in Mboubutho that there is a saying when one is visited by friends after a long absence, "Is your *masi kalou* buried at my village that you do not come to see me?"

The aspirants in Mboubutho must not be mentioned by their names, and their attendant friends are their *Toma*, which nearly all over Tholo is the equivalent of the coast *Tau* (friend). The *Kula* also may not address their friends by their proper names. They mutually address each other as *Nongu Toma* (my friend). As they return home, they are attacked by a party of their fellow tribesmen who lie in ambush on the road, and shoot at them with arrows and pelt them with throwing-clubs, *ula*. The *Kula* then plunder the gardens and kill the pigs of their neighbours, for which they have licence, the owners only shrugging their shoulders and saying, "The path of the *Kula* has passed this way." Also it has become a saying when one robs a garden without licence, "Is he a *Kula* that he can do this thing?"

The ritual differs in each tribe; to give them in full would fill a large volume, but the foregoing gives a general idea of what used to be done. In all probability newly appointed district officers will serve their whole term without hearing anything about circumcision.



It may die out altogether, but in my time a man was considered unclean until he had undergone the operation.

TATTOO.—When I arrived in 1870 the young girls about Suva and in the adjacent districts of Rewa and Mbau were not tattooed, but the middle-aged and elderly women had been. As the practice there was confined to that part of the body which is covered by the waist-cloth no outward signs were visible. Westward down the coast to Nandrong-a and inland the mouths were also tattooed. In some places the markings only consisted of a small elongated circle or ellipse on each side of the mouth, which scarcely could be regarded as a disfigurement. Rather it added a spice of roguery to a girl's face, especially when there was a *seleuka* or native cigarette tucked away there. In other parts all the chin, with a broad sweep round the mouth, including the upper lip, were hideous with the dark blue tracery of the art. When I went to Tholo East in 1884 the custom was still in full swing in the remote districts in the very heart of Viti Levu. In my rounds through the villages I got to know most of the children, amongst whom were many pretty girls. On a subsequent visit I would find them completely changed, and their countenances spoilt by the tattoo.

One of the charms of Fijian life is that there is so much open boat work possible in the sheltered waters of "the lazy locked lagoon." The barrier reefs of coral, often miles distant from the shore, afford a wide space of comparatively smooth water. Though protected from the ocean swell the expanse inside the reefs is sufficiently large to permit of a good deal of rough water. It is all right and very pleasant as long as one is running down before the constant S.E. trade, but on the return journey a wind with a touch of west is sighed for. In the days of my youth I often jumped into a boat clad only in a pair of white duck trousers, a shirt and a straw hat, and ran down the coast towards Nandrong-a before the fresh fair trade. That was easy enough, the difficulty was to return. A day's journey westward meant a three days' travail to get home again. That was overcome in a measure by night sailing, as then on the south coast of Viti Levu the wind frequently draws to the west a bit and blows off the shore. My boatmen would invoke the Spirit of the Land Breeze by crying :

"Come, come, O Spirit,  
From the ladies of the west ;  
O ladies with the black mouths,  
Give us a fair wind."

My boat boys were generally from Suva or Rewa and thus did they

note the difference between their own womenkind and those in Ra or the region towards the setting of the sun.

Tattooing was performed in the secret recesses of the forest by the hereditary priestesses. Very little is known about it, yet, as I endeavoured to set forth in Chapter VII, the practice is a veritable keynote to early Fijian and Polynesian history. I was too driven by work, whilst on the spot, to consider the matter seriously, and it is only since my retirement that I have had the leisure to ponder it. Some years before I left Fiji in 1910 I think that the practice had altogether died out. Old women still exist who perhaps could throw light on the subject if patiently cross-examined.

The writer of the article on circumcision in the *Na Mata* of May, 1919, says that the renaming of girls and their dedication to the tribal service took place in the remote spots in which they were tattooed. On no account were they publicly presented in the Temple as the boys were.

Malakai Navatu, who in my time was *Mbuli* of Mboumbutho, and Joseva Bembe Tumbi, whom I mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, who became *Mbuli* of Yalatina, each wrote a monograph on tattooing for me. From their quaintness and simplicity I venture to reproduce them *verbatim*.

## TATTOOING

Notes by Malakai Navatu, late *Mbuli* of Mboumbutho

Tattooing was the revered and beautiful ornamentation of the women to which great weight was attached both by men and women, and it was performed in the following manner: The woman to be tattooed must be quite free from the custom of women, must fast for a clear twelve hours, from daylight till eve, and the night before she must fish for freshwater prawns from dark till dawn, and must search for and procure three lemon thorns to be affixed to pieces of reed stems as handles (the instrument for the operation). Then she had to lie on her back before the old woman who concocted in a coco-nut shell the liquid used for the staining. This ancient dame blessed the liquid and prayed to the spirits of the dead to soften the skin of the girl so that the operation should not pain her too much. Then the tattooing commenced, the sacred part being the first to be done. The pain which it caused was called "the extraction of the spear." When this had been done, which was the part that gave much pain, the girl was soothed into a heavy sleep, and then the operator pushed on with her work. The pattern traced was like that

printed on native cloth like the painted cloth of Nairukuruku. There were different methods of doing tattooing, like the different kinds of games, and they had two names—one, the “Net,” because it looked like the meshes of a net ; two, the *Ihala*.

Also there were two people concerned in the operation : the first was Lewavuku, the wise woman ; the second, Lewandaumbati, the woman operator.

The girl's intended husband had to present them with a club, as an earnest or preliminary payment, then he had to feed the operators and provide a feast on the fourth day after the conclusion of the operation. By then the skin on the body would have healed. That day was called “the shedding of the scales.” Then all the women would gather together to witness the falling off of the scales, and it used to rouse the envy of the young girls to see the beautiful pattern. It was shown to them, like you set a bait for a dog, to make them also want to be tattooed. It was also done for the sake of the woman's husband, that when he went to sleep with her that he, too, when he undid her *liku* (grass dress) might see the beautiful tracery. For that reason the woman's lips were tattooed that her husband might desire to kiss them.

FROM THE FIJIAN OF JOSEVA BEMBE TUMBI, LATE  
MBULI OF YALATINA

Concerning the tattooing of former times there was no reason or meaning for it, being merely an ornament on the part of the women to attract men. When an old woman saw a girl growing up, she would say to her : “It is time you were tattooed before you grow old ; it is better to get it done whilst you are young and your body supple.” Then the girl would become willing to be tattooed. Then she would take some *masi* or native cloth to one skilled in tattooing as an earnest of payment, and afterwards when she went to the *Vale* (women's house) she would pay over *tambua* (cachalot teeth), more native cloth, and *liku* (grass dresses) for the commencement of the tattooing. Whilst the tattooing was going on the girl's man would be fishing and getting ready the fourth night feast for the wise woman. As the tattooing proceeded and the shaddock thorn dealt badly with the girl's flesh she would tell her man, who was to be her husband, and he would make payments to the wise woman, and then the shaddock thorns would be better directed.

When the woman was tattooed her husband and his family would make a feast for the wise woman and give her property, and then

she would return to her own home. Then the girl who had been tattooed would be invested with the *liku* (native grass dress, the badge of womanhood, as the *malo* was that of manhood), the name of the dress being the *Vorivori ni Sususung-i Tiko* (the debut or coming out). One reason that women were emulous in getting tattooed was that when they went to bathe together they were not ashamed, i.e. those that had been tattooed; whilst those who had not, hid their shame with a grass dress. Also, those not tattooed bathed in another pool on account of their shame. So that was the reason of their emulation. Moreover, a woman who was not tattooed got roundly cursed. If a man immaturely deflowered his virgin she would say that she suffered again the pain of the tattooing, but if he was continent and awaited the proper time then she would say that she had not again felt the prick of the shaddock thorns. When young girls went about with women who had been tattooed they would say to them, "Take off your dresses that we may see your tattooing, whether it is good or bad." When they saw it they liked it, and "Oh! that we too could be tattooed, it looks so beautiful." Then they all greatly desired to be tattooed. Then they would greatly take up the time of the woman who tattooed. Some time after the tattooing the girl would send word to her husband to come to her. Then the woman's family and the husband's family would collect property to exchange, and other property to hand over to the woman's people without anything in return, in payment for the woman. Then the couple would sleep together. The next morning all the women would go and bind the *liku* (grass dress) round the bride's waist; each woman would take her a *red liku*. Then on the fourth day the husband and wife would go and bathe together, and the families of both would kill pigs and have a great feast in order that the man and his wife might feed together, and after that all would return home and go their own way.

## CHAPTER XIX

### Marriage & Divorce

**F**IJIANS had the greatest horror of inbreeding, and to prevent it they entirely prohibited marriage between cousins except in one particular degree. The exclusion from this rule was in regard to children the offspring of brothers and sisters. It was founded upon an innate distrust of human nature, and upon the assumption that it is a wise child who knows its own father. All men, they argued, were licentious, and no woman was safe from their lust except their own sisters, with whom no one could be so depraved as to have intercourse. Therefore, they argued, in unions between the children of brother and sister there must be a certain definite remoteness of blood. All other degrees of cousinhood were considered to be in the same degree of relationship as that of brother and sister, and therefore marriages between such were accursed and under the strictest ban.

Very stringent barriers were placed between brothers and sisters. After their earliest infancy they were prohibited from speaking to each other and might not even mention each other's name. For a woman to utter her brother's name amounted to the most awful of curses. I heard of an occasion in which the late Andi Arieta Kuila, the daughter of King 'Thakombau, who governed the Naitasiri Province during the minority of her son, was greatly exasperated by something that her waiting-women had either done or omitted to do. In her fury she exclaimed: "I will swear the most dreadful of oaths. I will mention the name of my eldest brother!" This terrible threat so upset the culprits that they begged her to inflict any punishment she liked rather than resort to such a dire extremity.

A boy and girl, children respectively of a brother and a sister are called *ndavolana*. The word is derived from the verb *ndavo*, to lie down. Fijians are fond of reciprocatives and terms expressing mutuality, and render the bond existing between such couples as *veindavolani* which means the obligation to lie down together or cohabit. It used to imply the man's absolute proprietorship of the



woman, and he could do whatever he liked with her. The British peace brought release from this state of affairs, and women unduly pressed sought the relief the new regime afforded. However, about two years before I left Fiji, a youth who was *veindavolani* with a girl attempted to effect by force what he considered to be his right, which was being refused. Public opinion had so far veered round that the father of the maiden prosecuted the offender in the Provincial Court, where he was convicted and sentenced to eighteen months' hard labour.

For some years after the advent of our rule the returns showed that the native population was gradually decreasing. The Government took the matter greatly to heart, and applied every remedy possible with the result that the last few years have shown slight increases except when the Colony has been visited by any great epidemic, such as the Spanish influenza in 1918. Some of the critics of native affairs maintained that the marriage of cousins, that is, of those who stood in the permissible class of *veindavolani* was responsible for much of the mortality, which was principally confined to children. The birth-rate was always good, but an unduly large proportion of the children died during infancy, and by some this was ascribed to inbreeding induced by the unions of people too closely related. The Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the matter collected and tabulated a great quantity of information on this particular point, and it was established that as a rule the offspring in these cases were healthier and survived to a greater extent than those not so related. The conclusion drawn was that much superstitious veneration attached to these matches and induced a greater care in the upbringing of the progeny.

But the numbers of those who were in that particular degree of cousinship could not have been very great when we consider another peculiar habit of the Fijians. After a woman had given birth it was strictly the law that her husband should have no marital intercourse with her for at least three or four years, in order that the child might be properly suckled and nurtured. I have seen grown boys and girls about five or six years old still taking their mothers' breasts. Although, as it will be shown shortly, infant marriages were in vogue, couples did not come together until the woman was about sixteen or seventeen years of age, and taking the ancient custom into consideration and the rapid ageing of females in tropical climates, three or four children would be all that she would bear. For a man to transgress in this matter was considered an outrage on public decency, and his wife's relations would combine and inflict the horrible punishment

of *mbuturaki* on him. That implied his being knocked down and stamped upon. Fijians are strong, heavy men, and when a number of them got a victim down and jumped upon him, he generally bore their marks for the rest of his life.

Our milder system and the examples set by Europeans brought emancipation from the restriction set upon the intercourse of the sexes, although in the first years of my service public opinion still condemned undue uxoriousness on the part of a man. I have already said that some of the applications made to the Court were calculated to make my hair stand on end, many of which were from ladies who sought relief from what they considered the too great attentions of their lords.

This somewhat lengthy exposition is an endeavour to set forth the general principle underlying the ancient marriage law of Fiji. That part which deals with the unions of the offspring of brothers and sisters, who are *ndavolana* to each other, is universal throughout the group. I should like now to pass to the pretty and interesting customs practised in the hill country upon the wedding of a youth and maid. I have a paper on it before me written by one of my friends in Noemalu, a member of one of those tribes which I have mentioned as having adopted a Polynesian hero for their chief in the days of yore. As far as possible I will try to follow the native idiom, which is, however, given to repetition and reiteration. The opening paragraph is a naïve and simple attempt to show the main principle of *veindavolani*, and therefore I am tempted to give it *verbatim*.

This is the account of Fijian marriages, written on the 2nd August, 1889:

“The commencement is like this: if a man has two children, one a woman and the other a man, and the woman gets married and goes away to another village and then brings forth a son, and her brother too gets married and has a daughter, then the proper course is for the woman, the mother of the male child, to go back to her native place and ask the maternal uncle of her niece to give her in marriage to her son. The maternal uncle always replies: ‘Very good, our daughter shall go unto your people to be a mother unto them.’”

Arrangements were often made for the marriages of children even before they were born. Men who were intimate friends, whose wives showed signs of adding to their families, would agree that if the sexes would permit they would further bind the ties between them by uniting their progeny in wedlock. Supposing that a pair of such friends were respectively presented with a boy and a girl, the first step would be for the maternal uncle of the girl to make a

ceremonious call upon the relatives of the boy. He took nothing with him except his *mouth*, with which he promised the girl to his friends. He was rewarded with handsome presents and sumptuously feasted. Returning home he divided the gifts amongst the girl's family, and they were regarded as the earnest which bound the marriage contract. The boy's kinsmen would then prepare an enormous repast which they presented to the prospective bride's relations. It was accompanied by a club which was handed to her maternal uncle. It was symbolical of the law, that of the club, and meant death to those who infringed it.

For the first few years of her life the little maid remained with her own people, but after she had been properly suckled and weaned her prospective husband's father assembled the members of his family and entertained them with a feast. He would harangue them then, and say that the time had come to bring home the new mother. Women in tribal matters are always so regarded, and are like unto the "mothers in Israel" of the Bible. Their supreme avocation is the bearing of children and the due maintenance of the strength of the clan.

At this feast the arrangements were made for taking gifts and visiting in state the bride's people, and the sending of a messenger to ask them formally to appoint a day for the meeting of the two families.

At the time agreed upon, the whole of the bridegroom's relatives, men, women and children, called in state upon the bride and her family and were formally received in the largest and most spacious of their houses. Her father ceremoniously accepted the whales' teeth and other gifts presented on such an occasion saying: "It is good, you may return home; to-morrow we will bring the woman to you."

In pursuance of this, a big pig was killed the next day and baked, and many other provisions were prepared with it. In addition each one took a present of some sort, knowing that whatever they gave would be amply repaid in return gifts. When all was ready they set out in a joyful procession to the bridegroom's village. They were not allowed to eat any of the food they took with them; that was exclusively reserved for those whom they were about to visit. As they neared their destination they wound a piece of bark cloth, five fathoms long round the girl for her sash, and covered her with more of the same material, to be used as her coverlet. As she approached her betrothed's house, his friends spread it with new mats, laying a strip of *masi* (bark cloth) over them, forming a pathway from the

entrance to the upper end. Up this crawled the girl's maternal uncle with the bride on his back. On no account was she to touch in any way the grass with which the house was strewn nor the mats which covered them. Arriving at the upper or chief end of the house she sat down there with her uncle, who at this particular ceremony is called the *Toko*, which simply means the prop or main support of a building. Then her father handed over to his hosts the food and the gifts which his people had brought with them.

When the ceremony had got so far the child husband appeared upon the scene, his smooth and supple skin glistening with oil, and robed in strips of flowing bark cloth, and with him came his boy kinsmen similarly attired. In his hand he carried a whale's tooth which he tossed to the bride and which she caught. By that time noon would have arrived, and the men and women of the place would file into the *rara* or village green with large baskets of food and baked pigs for the refreshment of their visitors, which were with all due form and ceremony presented to the bride's father, who in turn divided them out among his followers.

The next day a still greater feast would be presented to the visitors as they entered the *rara* enshrouded in masses of bark cloth. Of this they divested themselves and gave it to their hosts with many other things which they had brought with them. The bridegroom did not appear on this occasion but remained at home in his own quarters, but at midnight the women of the village went to the bride's house and sang. This was a signal for the boy to come and undo the *masi* wound round his girl's waist. After the women had repeated their song four times she went and sat in one of the small doorways at the upper end of the house. Then her lover came with a *kali* or native pillow. It generally stands on small legs, which form a kind of hook. He stretched this out and got the legs entangled in the sash of his future wife and with it he drew it off, being enjoined under many penalties, such as loss of reason or death, not to touch her with his hands.

This nearly completed the preliminary ceremonies, those practised during childhood, and the time had come for the return home of the bride's people. Her girl friends were supposed to be very sorrowful and downhearted at leaving her, and to cheer them up the young men on the opposite side got up theatrical representations known as *vakatasuasua*, which were gross and obscene mimicries of the intimacies of married life.

When the relatives had departed the girl remained under the guardianship and tutelage of her mother-in-law, who took her to the





THE RARA OR VILLAGE GREEN.

Sir John Thurston (standing) on the *rara* or village green of Nasongo, being presented with a *mang-iti* or feast. His *matanivanua*, or talking man, is seated by it returning thanks.

*Photo by the Hon. John Berry, M.L.C., Commissioner of Lands and Works, Nasongo, 3rd July, 1891.*





food gardens, instructed her in the boundaries of the tribal planting grounds, in the lore of the land, how to fish the hill streams, and in all sorts of domestic work.

All the time of their childhood the affianced couple did not speak to each other. As the youth increased in years and desired to do so, more presents had to be given to the girl's relations. Then the elders on his side would wag their wise old heads and say it was time for the girl to be tattooed, and she would retire to the forest's depth with some of the elderly female relatives of her husband, and there undergo the dread operation.

Some months after, the old people would have another consultation and say, "The girl is now well grown and healthy, and it is time she bore children and did her duty by the tribe." The ceremony called *tevu imbe* or the spreading of the mats, which formed the nuptial couch was then arranged. It was done in the upper part of the bridegroom's house, which was screened off from the lower end by a thick curtain of bark cloth, and there the couple spent their first night together. The next morning the young husband went to the big *Mbure* draped in many fathoms of *masi* which he took off and presented to his elders, and made a public declaration as to the virginity of his wife. Then he returned home and remained in seclusion with her for three more days and nights, during which time they were quietly fed by the man's womenfolk who passed in baskets of food unobtrusively through the side doors. On the fifth day the couple went and bathed together and passed the rest of the day catching *vo*, the blunt-headed little fishes that live in the sedges of the river banks. After that they returned to ordinary village life and probably never slept together again in their village residence. That was considered effeminate and unbecoming in a warrior, whose proper quarters were the great *Mbure* or tribal hall, which was the barracks or *place d'armes* for the fighting men in case of night surprises. However, men and women spent a great part of the planting season in little huts in their gardens which also served as storing places for their yams, and conjugal intercourse usually took place there. That, of course, was in times of peace when it was safe to pass the nights outside the fortifications of the strongholds.

After the conclusion of the ceremony of the spreading of the mats or nuptial couch the relatives of the bride and bridegroom mutually feasted each other. Then came the final function called the *mbuku liku* or the tying on of the dress. Hitherto the girl had worn the long straggly grass garb of maidenhood, reaching to her knees. Now she was invested with the short thick *liku* of womanhood. This was the

most important of all the ceremonies and was in reality the woman's marriage certificate. Frequently, in cases of marriage and divorce, I had to investigate the validity of old Fijian weddings. I usually called in the assistance of my native friends. They always found that the union was lawful and binding if the *liku* had been duly tied. The knot of the girdle, from which the fringe depended, was made on the right side, and the doing of it was the public acknowledgment of the legal status of a married woman.

This formal putting to bed of a newly married couple seems to be an ancient and far-spread custom. Smollett, in his *Humphrey Clinker*, gives an account of it at the wedding of Captain Lismahago and Miss Tabitha Bramble, when their friends with much hilarity tucked them up in the nuptial couch. "There he and his consort sat in state, like Saturn and Cybele, while the benediction posset was drunk; and a cake being broken over the head of Mrs. Tabitha Lismahago, the fragments were distributed among the bystanders, according to the custom of the ancient Britons, on the supposition that every person who ate of this hallowed cake should that night have a vision of the man or woman Heaven designed should be his or her wedded mate."

A friend who studied in Germany in the days of his youth told me that he frequently marched in the processions after marriages there, and assisted to tuck the happy couple in the family four-poster bed of state. Subsequently in after life, when fate took him to Burma, he found a similar custom prevalent there. In Samoa, one of Fiji's neighbouring groups, the first coming together of husband and wife, if of a great chiefly family, used to be acclaimed with much noise and hilarity, and the mats forming the nuptial couch were torn into shreds and preserved as charms. As regards Fiji the bringing together of the young couple and putting them to bed formally was a wise custom. When I came to make acquaintance with the people under my charge they were beginning to abandon their old habits and adopt those provided by the new state of affairs. Children were still betrothed in infancy by their parents, and subsequently the bridegroom would obtain a marriage licence and the couple would get married in accordance with the new law. After that they relapsed into the old custom, and each returned home to their parents' abode and did not cohabit. The old people after having got their youngsters duly married according to the new form neglected the old ceremony of the mat-spreading, and this omission led to a good deal of trouble. I found it out through divorce court proceedings. Many of the young husbands were modest and

diffident and took no steps to approach their girlish wives. Bolder and more unscrupulous men would avail themselves of this and take advantage of women so neglected. The injured husband would then perhaps file a petition for divorce, and it would transpire that the marriage had not been consummated, and the girl tired of the tardiness and want of enterprise of her lawful spouse succumbed to the wiles of a bolder lover.

The foregoing is the account of the customs attendant upon the marriage of a young Noemalu man, the *Ulumatua* or heir of some chieflike family, with a strain of Polynesian blood derived from a foreign ancestor. The antithesis of such are the Mboubutho, a purely Melanesian clan, and the following are the forms they observed on a similar occasion for an *Uamani* as they call a young chief. It was written by Malakai Navatu, the former *Mbuli* or head man of these people, whose paper on tattooing I have already submitted in the last chapter. His descriptions are always quaint and lucid, so I give here an accurate translation of his disquisition on marriage.

“When an *Uamani* or eldest son desired to get married he took a club to the father of the girl he wanted. This was called ‘The club to keep the road clear.’ It was the same as giving money in the present time as an earnest or pledge of promise. The father used to give the club to his son, the brother of the girl, or if he had no son, to the son of his own brother, or failing that, he kept it himself. The club was shown to the girl, but the name of the youth, the owner who had presented it, was kept from her, for did she know she would refuse him.

When the time came for their marriage the youth’s family took presents to that of the woman. This was called *Naikandavi* or the fetching of the bride. There was much weeping and lamentation among the women of her village upon the day she left, and to console her she was generally accompanied by a young relation or handmaid to the house of her husband. A few days after her arrival there her own people came over in order to present her and other property to her husband’s tribe. During this time she remained anointed with turmeric.

Upon the arrival of her own relations at the house they spread mats and the girl lay down upon them. She was then covered with folds of native cloth, a hundred fathoms at the very least being used for this purpose. When she was quite concealed beneath this *masi*, her friends placed a string of *tambua* or whale’s teeth on top of it,

and made a formal presentation of the heap. The father of the youth then laid his hands on it and made this speech, "I accept this, that our *Uamani* may have children."

The next day the *Uamani's* people made a feast which was called the *Soisoikalou* (the god-like gathering). It was not permitted to be brought in baskets but had to be carried on a large wooden tray crowned with a baked pig wrapped up in native cloth. It was fetched into the house by the *Uamani*. He took it to the upper end, where the bed was, and sat down still facing the upper end, and passed the food to his back or behind him. The lower part of the house was filled by the guests, but none of them touched the food. The bride then came forward and placed it before them and then sat down and clapped her hands.

This feast was made at midday, and after it the bride went and bathed and washed away the turmeric with which she had been anointed by her own relations. On the evening of this day her husband's people applied a new coating of oil and turmeric. Then she went back to the house and sat down to have the *liku* tied on, the *liku of vau* (woman's dress made from the fibre of a species of hibiscus). For this purpose she knelt down with her face towards the upper or private part of the house, with her hands clasped above her head so that her friends could tie the *likus* on. If her friends were numerous they would reach from her waist to her throat. The bridegroom was not present at this. He waited outside till the tying of the *liku* was finished. Then he entered the house rolled up in folds of native cloth, a hundred fathoms of which formed his turban. This trailed away in a long streamer which was borne by his young companions. Then came the whole retinue of his family bearing presents, and as they entered the bride's house they were greeted by the inmates with prolonged shouts of "*A, oi, oi—a, oi, oi!*" Their offerings became the property of the bride's people and were taken home by them.

After this the husband and wife remained apart often for some years. Cohabitation did not take place immediately as is lawful in these times. The youth slept at the *Mbure* and the maiden at her house. It was impossible that they could come together for at least one, two or even three years. It was the custom, that if the youth came to the house where the females of his family dwelt to have a meal, if his wife were present, that he should eat quickly and leave immediately he had finished, in order to show his modesty. It was a very strict custom; he might not even speak to his wife.



However, the time came at last when it was proper for the youth to speak to his wife. He then took presents to her, usually native cloth and a whale's tooth. These she took from his own hands and this was called the *ka ni veisalaki* or the coming together, and after that it was lawful for them to talk and have cheerful intercourse.

Then they prepared to sleep together and the *Uamani* told his female relatives to prepare the house for that purpose, and would say, "Women, to-day you will spread the mats." They then slept together and remained shut up in the house for four days and nights, with all the doors securely fastened. Their food was taken them by the husband's mother. The first morning she addressed her son and said, "My child was it a warm or a cold house?" If the girl was all that she ought to have been the reply was, "Mother, it was a warm house." If otherwise, the answer was "cold." On the fourth day the couple went and bathed together. During the time they were in the house the youth kept his dress of *masi* on, and the woman her *liku*. They must not be naked together. Also they remained anointed with oil and turmeric for the whole four days and nights.

And what this youth did, so did his son. Such was the custom of our forefathers."

So ends this particular narrative of Malakai Navatu, told in his own way.

It will be recollected that in Noemalu the young husband made a public declaration in the *Mbure* or communal hall as to his wife's virginity. It seemed usual to make some open allusion to the matter, and it gave rise to the use of satirical humour. About Suva, when I first arrived in Fiji, at the feast which followed the consummation of a wedding, if the lady was not all that could be desired, the food was served up in old baskets lined with faded leaves and with the bottoms knocked out, and the joint, the usual pig baked whole, was presented with a plantain in its mouth. On the other hand, should all be correct the repast was dished up on green glossy leaves in neat clean baskets. These sarcastic allusions were fairly common all over Viti Levu.

The absence of chastity did not seem to be greatly resented, although female honour was rigidly guarded and offences against it savagely avenged. The woman was to all intents and purposes a superior sort of chattel, and interference with her was an offence against property, which in all countries seems to have been more severely dealt with than personal injury. Fijians were unjustly

suspicious of their women's honour as in the rural districts, outside of the entourage of the great coast chiefs, the social evil was unknown. Temperamentally the women are cold, but given the opportunity they are too good-natured.

As already observed in a previous chapter, when an injured husband has just cause to doubt his wife's chastity he does not as a rule seek redress in the divorce court, but prefers a criminal information against his rival, and upon the latter's conviction and imprisonment considers that enough had been done for honour. Adultery and larceny are synonymous terms in the Fijian language, and a complaint for the former offence alleges that the respondent and co-respondent are mutually guilty of theft, i.e. they have combined in robbing the plaintiff of his just right.

Women are strictly brought up in the faith that concealment of illicit love will inevitably engender a long train of ailments and bad luck, which may be avoided by open confession. When childbirth is difficult the sufferer is exhorted to make a clean breast of all her affairs. When she does not do so, the midwives mention the names of those they suspect, and when at last they utter that of the real father the babe comes forth without further difficulty. Illicit love is as bad for the man as the woman. Youths who have had amours are enjoined to confess before marriage, otherwise they will be visited by a wasting sickness known as *ndong-ai*, a sort of general debility or anæmia. Both sexes are liable to be visited by it. When it appears the grey-heads of the family ominously wag their hoary pates and say, "Oh, yes, *ndong-ai*." A couple, whom for some canonical reason the Wesleyans refused to marry, came to me to get it done. The bridegroom was a fine upstanding young man who had done two years' service in the police and belonged to the district of Mboumbutho. About a year afterwards I spent a night at Nasongo, his village, and during it, Moave, the youth in question, died. Shortly before his death he confessed to several amours, and his chief, the *Mbuli* of the district, and the other elders solemnly said, "Oh, yes, *ndong-ai*, when a youth does not confess his sins before marriage he always dies, and so it has been with Moave."

As I have said before, when Fijians get sick they magnify their peccadilloes, and to have winked at a girl then becomes regarded as a sin. As a matter of fact the youth and maidens of the hill country were in reality most virtuous. The boys were taught to be continent until the time of their marriage, and so were the girls. I have often heard the elder men talking of the rising generation, and eulogising the young fellows as growing up proper men of Tholo, restraining

their lusts and passions until the right time. One could see the effects of their temperance in the lithe and active bodies, and in their proud and healthy bearing. Moreover, unlike their licentious neighbours to the eastward, the Polynesians, they were untainted with venereal diseases. In my time it was practically unknown, and in Tholo or the hill country it was certainly non-existent.

## CHAPTER XX

### Modern Marriages, Matrimony, Divorce

**O**LD people seem much the same all over the world in railing at modern fashions and setting forth how much better they managed things when they were young. Senior officers always deciam that the Services are going to the dogs or something worse, with brats coming into them with their new-fangled ideas and ways. So it was with the elders of the hill tribes; often and often have I heard them soliloquise on the glories of bygone days. Marriage was a favourite subject, and they used to sigh and shake their heads saying, "What can you expect when young fools of girls are allowed to have their own way in choosing their husbands; it is only equalled by the ease in which the *thaura vou* (young men) can now bring their marriages about. In the time of our youth marriage was marriage, and it was a long, arduous and expensive business. Now a young fellow can do the whole job by going down to Suva and working for a month on the wharves discharging and loading steamers. Then he comes home with a pound, and if he is crafty brings a few gaudy *sulus* and a *vinivoa* (pinafore) or two to cajole the girl with. For a shilling he gets a leaf of blue paper from the native magistrate, and then off they go to the native minister and get married for another shilling, or if he is *yalo tha* (badly disposed) they seek out the white magistrate who does the business for them. How different from the knotting of the *liku* when we were young men."

The Wesleyans were very narrow-minded in their views of marriage, and for many reasons they often refused to perform the ceremony. The premature appearance of the baby, breaches of canon law, and their own regulations were grounds of objection, and in such cases the parties had to have recourse to the white magistrates, who by registration could unite the couples. I never, if I could possibly help it, interfered with the rights of Mother Church, but there were times when I, perforce, had to intervene. Then I was always careful to give the lady her marriage lines with a solemn exhortation to pre-

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serve them as evidence of her respectability, and as having complied with the requirements of the law. I was entitled on such occasions to what the Government pompously called a Personal Emolument, the magnificent sum of one shilling, "for my own personal use and benefit." I generally made it my wedding present to the bride as a token of good will, with wishes for her future happiness. In the early days of the new law the ladies did not sufficiently regard the importance of their marriage certificates; they were but leaves of blue paper and were soon lost. Subsequently they were more seriously treated and could be produced when necessary.

In matrimonial causes one of the first points to be established is the proof of the marriage, and that is generally done by the production of the proper certificate. It was very obvious that in the case of old native weddings before the introduction of reading and writing, that could not be done, and they had to be proved by oral testimony. It was in investigating such that I learnt that the *mbuku liku* or public tying of the female garb of married life was the native equivalent to our document used in like case. Where the certificates had been lost it was necessary, too, to admit verbal evidence, and when for a time I acted as Resident Commissioner in Tholo West I often was confronted with statements that the parties had been married *vaka na kuila*, which means according to the flag.

One learnt never to be puzzled by Fijian ideas and impressions. They could generally be elucidated by patience and a little questioning, and by them I dug out the reason for the flag quotation. The civil wedding performed by the white magistrates was but an act of registration, very humdrum and prosaic. Some of the young district officers (we were all young in those days) tried to impart a little romance to the proceeding. Hugh Hastings Romilly, who wrote *From my Verandah in New Guinea* and other stories of the Western Pacific, was for a while Acting Resident Commissioner for Tholo West. That province was the last to emerge from the old ways, and it was there that the last fighting occurred, being the scene of "The Little War." After its pacification and the people had begun to follow the new system, candidates for holy matrimony applied to Romilly, who when he had filled up the forms and certificates used to wave the Union Jack vigorously over the heads of the newly united couples. That was something imposing, and impressed the people far more than the filling up and registering of trumpery leaves of blue paper, and so the proceeding was popularly called "Marriage according to the Flag." It really was a most happy inspiration to use the glorious emblem of the British Peace in such a manner for those



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who had just emerged from cannibalism and their former wild ways.

Another magistrate used to join the hands of the couples and say, "Whom God has joined together let no man put asunder." A certain shyness on my part prevented me from doing anything beyond the necessary registrable acts, but upon one occasion I was led into making what I afterwards thought was a silly and theatrical display, but the sequel showed that my native friends pronounced it to be a most handsome and imposing performance, as they quaintly put it.

In the A.N.C. at Nandarivatu was a handsome young chief who sowed many crops of wild oats, which from time to time caused me much trouble. He was only in the ranks at first, but attaining to commissioned rank he subsequently became my senior native officer, and now, by virtue of his rank and his own intrinsic ability, is the *Roko Tui* or native Lieutenant-Governor of the province of his birth. After I had procured his promotion I gravely admonished him and said, "Look here, I am tired of getting you out of your many scrapes. Now that you are appointed to a responsible and serious post you had better settle down and get married. Go home for a while and see your kinsman the *Roko*, and then come back with a lawful wife." The young gentleman departed on his leave and returned with a lady and a letter from his relative the *Roko*, whom he subsequently succeeded. The letter was to this effect: "We tried to get . . . suitably married, and chose a nice young girl befitting his rank and position, but he prefers her elder sister, the widow of one of the *Mbulis* here. There has been much talk and disputation about it, so I told him he better take the lady back with him and I beg you, Sir, to see that they get properly married."

As I always tried to steer clear of interfering with the functions of the Church I sent the couple to the nearest Wesleyan native minister, but that gentleman thought he smelt a rat, and came to me and said he would not like to officiate until he had communicated with his superior, the white missionary in charge of the circuit. As he lived some distance away it meant a considerable delay. After about a fortnight the native minister again visited me and produced a letter from his reverend senior. It gave a grudging permission for the performance of the marriage, which was spoilt by a post-script, which translated from the vernacular was, "Alas, alas! this seems a terrible affair, a runaway match!"

I could see by his demeanour that the native minister would rather not proceed further in the matter, and being nettled by the

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narrow-mindedness of his spiritual superior, whom I damned in my own mind, I determined in my civil capacity to solemnise the marriage myself. I was the bridegroom's C.O. and his friend also, and I thought that the event should be marked by something out of the common, which would also help to enliven the monotony of our solitary hill post. I therefore ordered a full dress parade, we draped a table with the Union Jack at the top of the barrack room at which I stood arrayed in my best. The men fell in with fixed bayonets on either side, and up the aisle thus formed the happy pair advanced, with the junior native officer in support, as best man. I joined together the hands of bride and bridegroom and filled in the certificates. Then the bugles sounded the General Salute and afterwards the Dismiss, when we adjourned for the wedding feast of baked pig and yams. This was followed by a cricket match in the afternoon and a big sing-song in the evening, about the sum-total of what we could do in the way of amusement at that lonely spot.

Afterwards I reflected what a silly ass I had been to have lent myself to such a theatrical display, but I found out eventually that it had quite pleased the men. Subsequently, when I was on circuit in the Soloira district, whose *Mbuli* or head man was the father of our junior lieutenant, I saw a letter written by the youth describing the event to his parent. I found that it had become popularly known as *vakamau vakai valu*, which means marriage according to the custom of war. After describing it minutely he ended with this: "I would have you to know, Sir, that it was a most handsome and imposing ceremony, and one that pleased us soldiers very much indeed." *Totoka* is the Fijian word for handsome, and one they are very fond of using.

In the last chapter I mentioned that troubles arose from the falling into disuse of the old custom of bringing married couples together by the spreading of mats for the nuptial couch, especially in the case of bashful boys, and how bolder and unscrupulous men availed themselves of this state of affairs. As usual the intervention of the Resident Commissioner was sought, and it was asked that he should compel by an order the errant wives to render themselves unto their proper lords. At first there was no law on the subject, but a great deal of clamour was made in the District and Provincial Councils, and so it was brought under the notice of the Supreme Government, and an enactment dealing with it was passed by the Native Regulations Board. The orders made under it were about as futile as the decrees made here in England in the present time for restitution of conjugal rights. In old Fiji they were compelled by

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physical force, but under a civilised regime they cannot so be enforced, and the native women soon discovered their emancipation.

Both men and women would go to great extremes when they thought they had genuine grievances to complain of, and would then even commit offences to bring their cases under the notice of the authorities. It was nearly always fatal to accuse parties wrongfully, as the allegations were often followed by the commission of the acts which were said to have been done. I have frequently heard cases in which the accused pleaded guilty, and said, "So-and-So said I did it and lied about me; it rankled in my mind and I determined that I would give cause for it and do that with which I was charged." In connection with this mental attitude I often think of that passage in *The School for Scandal*, in which Joseph Surface says to Lady Teazle, "When a husband entertains a groundless suspicion of his wife, and withdraws his confidence from her, the original compact is broken, and she owes it to the honour of her sex to endeavour to outwit him."

Four or five years after I had got settled down at Vunindawa a report was brought to me that a woman had cut off one of her little fingers. There is, I believe, an old English statute against maiming and self-mutilation. Now I have forgotten my little stock of law, but then I was reading hard for my admission to the Fijian Bar, and here was an interesting case right at hand. I discovered that the elders and men of a large village had convened a Court of their own and tried a woman for refusing to marry a man to whom she was betrothed. They sentenced her to be flogged, and carried their decision into effect. The victim, with the crooked reasoning of her country, cut off her finger in order that I should hear of it, instead of coming direct to me. I avenged the lady and the outraged majesty of the law by giving the offenders short periods of hard labour on the main road across the island, a section of which I had under construction then. It was just approaching the village where the flagellation had taken place, and so the old men could sleep at home and be fed by their wives. The punishment suited native sentiment and caused no expense to the Colony in the way of rations, etc. It was pronounced to be eminently just. "What," said the local public, "could those people expect? They stole the prerogative of the Government and held a Court of their own and flogged a woman, a double crime for which they ought to have a double punishment."

I often gained an insight into native opinion by hearing local tales and gossip. A sprightly young friend looked in upon me one morning, saying that he had just come up from Suva and would like to tell me

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the latest news, and then he unfolded this story : " Whilst I was down there, Sir, one of the new mail steamers that run between Australia and Canada came in. How can I describe what a magnificent canoe it was ! Although it came in broad sunlight the clouds of smoke from its funnel made it as dark as night, and the street lamps had to be lit up, and so had those in the shops and houses. Now on board of that steamer, Sir, was a *vaiamani* (fireman), a great fighting man, an *ndau ni mbokisi* (boxer), and he sent forth a challenge that he would fight anyone in Suva for ten pounds. Nobody took it up and the man became very scornful and boastful. Ratu Sakiusa, the senior native officer of the A.N.C., got very hot-tempered at this and said, ' If I were not so old and fat I would fight him myself.' Somebody went and told the fireman that Ratu Sakiusa accepted the challenge and up he went to the A.N.C. barracks within the Governor's compound at Nasova. Then like fire in a dry bamboo brake spread the news that Ratu Sakiusa and the man from the steamer were going to meet in battle. The white gentlemen shut up their offices and warehouses, we of Viti and the Solomon Islanders working on the wharves left our jobs, and up thronged everyone to the A.N.C. parade ground, within the fence of our Great Chief, the Governor. Mr. Farewell, the Commandant, looking forth from his quarters saw the crowd and called out, ' Ho ! sergeant of the guard, what is all this ? ' and the sergeant said, ' They have come up, Sir, to see the senior native officer fight the fireman.' The order then was, ' Let the big war drum (*lali*) be sounded.' Then as its notes wailed forth Mr. Farewell shouted, ' *Ra Sotia* (noble soldiers), fall in, fix bayonets and charge.' You just ought to have seen them, Sir, how we all scurried and fled, white gentlemen and all, and it was lucky that Mr. Farewell did not give the order for the A.N.C. to fire on us. He would have been quite right had he done so, and shot us all. We were all guilty of trespassing within the Governor's fence, and had we been killed nothing could have been said as we were all in the wrong and the law was against us."

The next time I met Farewell I told him this yarn and found that it had a slight substratum of truth, added to by my friend in his love of hyperbole. It was true that the fireman had issued the challenge and that Ratu Sakiusa had spoken as he was said to have done, and that a certain number of loafers had appeared on the parade ground from which they had been ejected by an unarmed squad.

A few Fijians from time to time worked as firemen on the big steamers, and a certain sort of Freemasonry sprang up between the white men so employed and the native labourers on the wharves.



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Ratu Ambrose, the hereditary *Roko Tui Suva* or Chief of Suva was a champion draught player, which is also a favourite amusement with the knights of the stokehold. In the tropics they usually play on one of the hatches, and many matches came off there between them and Ambrose, in which they were always worsted. It proved a small gold mine to those in the know. Those who were, when they came to Suva again with a new crew would say to the greenhorns if Ratu Ambrose came on board, "Hallo, here's that *kuego* who thinks he can play draughts; he will beat you though." Then a greenhorn would back himself to win and lose his money. *Kuego* is Jack's way of pronouncing *ko iko*, the Fijian for "you there," the usual way of addressing a native whose name you do not know, equivalent to the Anglo-Indian *Qui bai*, which has, I believe, the same meaning. I have heard of the mate of a steamer writing a note to his agents to say that he was shorthanded and wanted some more *kuegoes* to help with the landing.

In my judicial days whilst sitting on the Bench I expect I should have ruled out the last two paragraphs as not being within the four corners of the indictment, but I often found that what was seemingly irrelevant threw light upon native methods of thought. I must try and tell you something about divorce. Much discussion has been going on about it in our papers recently, and how it should be made cheaper and easier for the poor man. In Fiji we had a simple and effective way of dealing with it. The Stipendiary Magistrates were also Commissioners of the Supreme Court, and as such had jurisdiction in cases of debt, breaches of contract, and trials of torts where the amount in dispute was under fifty pounds, much the same as the County Courts had when they first came into operation. To these were added the hearing of divorce causes where the parties were either Fijians or Indian settlers. The proceedings were very simple and inexpensive. The aggrieved party filed a petition setting forth the relief sought, on which the Commissioner issued a summons calling upon the other parties to appear before his Court. Upon their doing so the petition was read and the parties asked if they would like an adjournment to permit of their obtaining legal advice. I never knew this asked for in the case of Fijians, who, however, during my whole experience did not once sue for damages. On the other hand, Indians delight in litigation, and both sides would generally handsomely fee counsel to conduct their case. After taking the evidence the depositions were forwarded to the Chief Justice with a recommendation from the Commissioner as to the decision which he thought would justly meet the requirements of the case. Supposing



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that he considered that the marriage should be dissolved the Chief Justice returned his decree *nisi* that it should be done after three months from the date of pronouncement, unless during that time sufficient cause to the contrary was shown. The Commissioner then summoned the parties again and exhibited the decree to them, with the great seal of the Supreme Court attached to it. At the expiration of the three months the Commissioner returned the decree *nisi* with a regular form stating that no cause against it had been shown. Then two decrees absolute were sent to him which were handed to the petitioner and the respondent, and thus the whole affair was concluded without the parties having to leave their districts or fee lawyers. The filing of the petition cost a pound, and that was the main expense, and the whole thing cost less than thirty shillings. The great red seals of the Supreme Court impressed the Fijians very much, who said they were *totoka sara*, very handsome.

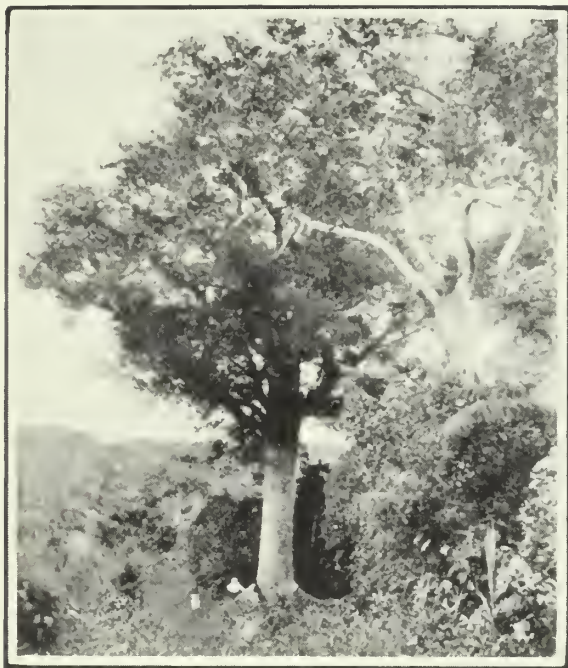
I once had a unique experience following my hearing a divorce case of which the dissolution was granted, and I had handed the rules absolute to the parties. Some months afterwards I was holding Court at Rakiraki in the Ra Province when a man whom I knew came in, one of the village mayors known as *Turang-a ni Koro* or Lord of the Village. Fijians are as punctilious in addressing people by their titles as N.C.O.'s in the Army. So I said, "Hallo! *Turang-a ni Koro*, what do you want?" He replied somewhat sheepishly that he had come to me to get married. So I asked him to produce the licence from the native magistrate and bring the girl in. He called out and she stepped into the Court House. Looking up I ejaculated, "By Jove, it is Vive! (Phœbe)." It was his old wife whom he had but recently divorced. The *Turang-a ni Koro* then explained that they had come to the conclusion that that business was a mistake, that they still loved each other and could not live apart. So they came to me to be remarried. I felt inclined to say, "Bless you, my children." As that would have meant rather an involved speech in Fijian I merely congratulated the couple upon their eminently sensible decision, and then asked the gentleman for my personal emolument of one shilling, which I destined for the bride, to which he said, "Hold on for a minute or two, Sir, please. I have not got any money, but I have got a basket of pearl shell; be *yalo vinaka* (of a good mind) to me and wait while I slip over to the white storekeeper and sell it."

Vive, as shown by the bracket, is the native form of Phœbe. I have often thought of making a glossary of Biblical names as they are pronounced by Fijians. They often used to puzzle me, and their

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unravelling afforded a good deal of amusement. Most uncommon names were selected, such as Boanerges, which is turned into *Vonijese* and Sosthenes and Tychicus which become respectively *Sosothine* and *Tikiko*. Priscilla under the form of *Virisila* is a favourite with women, and Bernice, which is, however, pronounced like *Verynicey*. I used to find the Acts of the Apostles and St. Paul's Epistles happy hunting grounds for rare and recondite names. One blackguard who frequently came before the Courts rejoiced in the name of Kaiava, otherwise *Caiaphas*. Yearly in Tholo East I used to issue a gun licence to a youth named *Tikilathi Vailisa*, by which is meant Tiglath Pileser. Roll-call of the A.N.C. resulted in a string of names that would very well have suited a Cromwellian regiment, such as Moses, Obadiah, David, Solomon, Absalom, etc., but all with their Fijian twists and turns.

As they impart their own pronunciation to our words so do the Fijians give their own particular lilt to our music. They love Moody and Sankey's hymns, which they render very well, as they keep excellent time and rejoice in part-singing. After I got married my wife thought she would help by playing the accompaniments on a small organ to the music given her by the Reverend C. O. Lelean, the head of the circuit in which we lived. But it was in vain; the choir always took charge and soared away in many flourishes not provided in the score. I used to watch with fascination the big toe of Sergeant-Major Jemesa beating time as he led the singing through the varied mazes of Fijian fancy.



### A SPIRIT HAUNTED TREE.

The great *ndakua* tree, or Fijian kauri pine, where Timothy, the mail runner, encountered the two dreadful *yalewa kalou*, or goddesses, whose love is fatal to mortal man.

*Photo by Sir John Thurston.*



### A WEST OR SPEAR DANCE

Second from right, front row, is Ndavelevu the old Nasongo Chief, who strangled his mother

*From a photograph by Sir John Thurston*



## CHAPTER XXI

### The Overland Mail, Ghosts & Death

**A**FTER a disquisition on birth and marriage customs it seems but natural to pass on to death and matters appertaining to the spiritual world. Why then drag in the Overland Mail? The reason is that much was learnt from it about ghosts and *tevoro* (devils) which used to terrify the postmen.

When I went to Vunindawa in 1884 I used to send a constable for my letters once a week to Nandurulolo, the Resident Commissioner's headquarters on the Lower Rewa, which was in daily communication with Suva. That kept me in touch with the outside world and I got my papers and magazines regularly. In 1887, at the Jubilee Ball given by the Governor, Sir Charles Mitchell, there was a great gathering of the members of the Service from all quarters, and I had a talk with Basil Thomson, the well-known head of the C.I.D. at Scotland Yard, who told me how cut off he was, and the long intervals between the arrivals of his mails. He was then stationed at Fort Carnarvon, the headquarters of the Tholo West Province. This lonely and isolated spot had been established by Sir Arthur Gordon during his "Little War," and had been named after the Earl of Carnarvon, who was then Secretary of State for the Colonies. The place, however, was generally known by its Fijian designation, Natuatua-thoko. We had in those days a romantic and sentimental Commissioner for Native Affairs, who expressed his emotions in poetic effusions. After a visit to Fort Carnarvon he embalmed his feelings in verse, of which I can only recollect the opening lines :

"In Viti Levu's lonely heart  
Natuatua-thoko stands apart."

As the boundaries of Thomson's province marched with mine I suggested that he should arrange to have his letters addressed to my care so that my man could pick them up weekly at Nandurulolo, when he went down there for the Tholo East mail. I could then send them on to Korolevaleva, the bracken-crowned hill on the



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main divide, where my mail carriers gave me the little geographical lesson regarding the size of Viti Levu, mentioned in Chapter III. There his man could meet mine and exchange bags, and thus weekly he could ensure a regular receipt of his incoming mail and the despatch of his outward letters. Such a simple arrangement was easily carried out, but the Resident Commissioner at Natuatathoko often went down to the northern coast district at Mba to assist in magisterial duties, so gradually the carriage of the mail spread down there. Mba and Rakiraki, some forty miles further up the coast at the extreme northern apex of Viti Levu, are large cane planting districts with central sugar mills, and the planters asked me to try and get their letters also sent overland.

In 1887 Fiji was nearly at its last gasp financially owing to the severe blows dealt against the sugar industry by the German Bounty System. The Colonial revenue declined with the fall in the value of the staple product, and Sir Charles Mitchell was sent out as Governor to try to cope with the situation. He was a Colonel of Marines, and had a great reputation as an economist, and he proceeded to act up to it by ruthlessly cutting down all the establishments. Nearly half the Service was dispensed with, and those who were not retrenched out of it had their pay and allowances considerably shorn. All drawing more than three hundred a year had a tax of fifteen per cent imposed on their salaries, and those under were charged ten per cent. He made such pessimistic reports upon the state of Fiji and such gloomy prognostications that the Colonial Office was in despair until the happy thought arose that, perhaps, if Sir John Thurston, who thoroughly understood the Islands, were appointed, we might be able to carry on. He was then at Washington on diplomatic business connected with American claims to lands in Fiji. The experiment was tried and proved a complete success owing to the indomitable pluck and perseverance of Sir John, aided by the scientific methods which the sugar companies employed in the cultivation and manufacture of that article. Gradually things got better, and we in the Service got a refund of the salaries tax after it had been imposed for three years. Thus fortunately it only proved a compulsory saving, and the lump sum returned was most welcome to the poor hard-ups like myself.

The problem before me was to run the Overland Mail without any expenditure at all. I knew it was no use asking the Governor for money. I had just in the commencement of his regime started a little road-making on what eventually became the main highway across Viti Levu. His Excellency heard of it and sent for me, and

said that he was much interested in the work. We had next to no tools, and the earth cutting was being done with digging sticks. I thought it a favourable opportunity to ask for a few spades and picks. The reply was a great big peremptory No! not a halfpenny of any expenditure would be sanctioned. It was equally hopeless to apply to the Resident Commissioner for assistance. He hated all innovations, and started at once to growl at having to receive Thomson's mails, and as the system increased and at last received official cognizance, he charged me with having initiated it without his consent and showing gross disrespect by doing it over his head.

But I early learnt to be resourceful, and I mobilised my reserves and pressed the Lost Legion, mentioned in Chapter XIII, into the Overland Mail service. There were always a few stalwart native gentlemen in the Provincial Jail, offenders against the seventh commandment, who according to their ideas were there for the good of their souls and to be purged of their hot blood. I divided the mail track into beats and allotted a prisoner to each. They were looked after, fed and housed by the *Turang-a ni Koro* or village mayors of the places adjacent to their stations, who in return for their care of the carriers were allowed to employ them in their food gardens when off duty.

The mail-carrying demanded speed and regularity, but it only really occupied a few hours of the postmen's time. The distances to be covered were too far from headquarters to allow of their being sent out each time to their respective beats, and their employment by those who fed and housed them was quite legitimate from the point of native custom. I spread my men to my boundaries, and the officers in the other districts did the same in theirs, and so we passed the mails across Viti Levu with certainty and according to the timetable laid down. For twenty-three years it was under my control, and with one exception, about which I hope presently to tell a rather romantic story, it ran like clockwork. It was the one regular postal institution upon which the settlers relied, and by which they swore.

Part of the carrying had, of course, to be at night, and thereby arose my first troubles. The men whose duty it was then, protested vehemently against the horrors and terrors of travel after dark from the danger of encountering *tevoro* and ghosts. I endeavoured to get over that by doubling the night carriers, and then I found that the rascals, instead of going together, halved the beats to make soft and easy jobs. Fire, I discovered, a good blazing torch of bamboo or flaring bundle of dry reed stems, scared the evil spirits away, and such were always procurable without any cost to the taxpayer.

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Afterwards, as the public got to appreciate the regular delivery of their letters, the paternal Government supplied hurricane lanterns and kerosene oil. They were useful to light the paths, but, to use a native idiom, they were not sufficiently strong for the devils to respect, and so the good old *thina* or torch remained in vogue too.

During one of my travels through Viti Levu I halted one night in an up-country village. After dinner in the big house the people came in to pass the evening away with *yangona* (*kava*) and conversation. Before long the usual topics of the crops, the weather and the local gossip exhausted, I endeavoured, as was my custom, to turn the talk on to the old folklore. To make a start I asked if any of my audience had ever had any experiences of *tevoro* or ghosts. Most of those present shook their heads dubiously; they all had heard of and most thoroughly believed in them, but on the whole were inclined to think that they had had no personal adventures themselves.

Then from the body of the assembly a young man named Timothi (anglice Timothy) just recently discharged from the ranks of the Lost Legion modestly observed, "I, Sir, have seen *tevoro*. I was one of the carriers on the Overland Mail which I took at night between our Government station at Vunindawa and Nambila. It arrived one evening at seven as usual from Suva. The native magistrate gave the bag to me and told me to go on with it, and not to light my torch until clear of the station, as it was forbidden to carry naked lights there. I went on in the dark as far as Ndeleitonga, the next village, and then lit up. When I got to the part of the road where the big precipice overhangs the river I suddenly felt my body begin to glow and burn all over, and when I reached the great *ndakua* tree I saw two gigantic goddesses coming along the road one after the other and talking to each other. They were very lovely and had the finest *tombe* (love-locks) I have ever seen, and as they walked their breasts flapped and flapped against their sides making a loud and dreadful noise. I was in the most mortal terror and down I fell. I tried to yell out but my voice failed me. Then I managed to get on my knees to say my prayers, but words would not come. Then I prayed inwardly three times and the goddesses fled, and I saw them enter the door of the big *Mbure* at Tau Levu. I staggered past it to Nairukuruku the next village and managed to fling myself into the house of Manasa.

Directly he saw me he said this boy has seen a *tevoro*, and asked me if it were not so, but I could not answer him. So he made a decoction of lemon leaves and bathed me with it and gave me some medicine, which revived me, and I told him what I had encountered.

‘Oh, yes,’ said he, ‘they were the *Alewa Kalou* (goddesses) whose haunt is at the great *ndakua* tree.’ After a while when I felt better I went on with the mail bag to the end of my beat, and although it was pitch dark and I passed through lonely places I saw no more spirits, nor have I since then seen any.”

It is quite thirty years since I wrote out Timothy’s story, and it was not until years after that I saw Stevenson’s tale of *The Beach at Falesa*. Readers of it will perhaps notice the similarity of Timothy’s *tevoro* to the dreadful goddesses that haunted the woods at Falesa, and the direful effects on the unfortunate mortals who chanced to encounter them.

“Ah!” said an elder who had listened to Timothy’s tale, “though I have never seen a *tevoro* I have heard them called and talked to. It is done by a custom called in these parts the *Luilui*. When we found a man dead in the bush with blood coming out of his eyes, ears and mouth and yet with no signs of violence on him or about the place where he has been found, we knew that he had been killed by a *tevoro*. Then we did the *Luilui* to find out the spirit that had done the deed. It was performed in this manner: the body was brought back to the house that used to belong to it and the friends all collected together there at night. Proclamation was then made in the village that everyone was to remain within his house with all doors shut. At midnight the dead man’s dearest friend climbed on to the ridge of the house where the body was lying and shouted *a lui lui lui, a lui lui lui*, from whence the custom derived its name. He had to call thus from each of the four corners of the house, until the evil spirit of the *ndakua* who slew his friend replied and acknowledged the deed. Then he challenged the *tevoro* to come and fight him the next day in the village. ‘All right,’ the reply would be, ‘I will come and serve you as I did your friend.’ Everybody in the village heard this and prepared to trap *Ra Tevoro* (Mr. Devil). All the young men armed themselves, in recent years with guns, of old with throwing clubs, bows and arrows, slings and spears, and hid themselves in the jungle along the narrow path along which the *tevoro* must come. Along it bowls of water were spread because the spirit was invisible and his presence only denoted by the splashing of the water as he tramped through it. Then everybody let drive, but it was not at all certain as to whether the spirit got killed, as no one could see it. We had to wait and see if it played any more pranks. If it did not, then you knew he had been done for. All the *ndakua* trees are infested with *tevoro*, and often when we sleep out in our gardens they come and scratch on the roof of the yam houses. If a man is alone then,



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there is only one thing to be done. Gather up all the burning embers of the fire, make them into a huge torch and bolt for home, yelling all the way for your friends to come out and help you. Then they too turn out with torches and with fire and shouts scare the evil spirit away."

When the first settlers at Suva landed in 1870 the native town stood where the gates of Government House are now. Often the people there were alarmed by *tevoro* at night, and used to fire muskets, beat their drums and yell. I frequently heard them myself, and it was quite a common occurrence. After we hoisted the Union Jack the Fijians were not allowed to retain their firearms, and with the growth of modern ideas they gradually calmed down and ceased their night alarms.

A loathsome complaint used to be prevalent in Fiji which the natives call *thoko*, and which is well known in medical parlance as yaws. People afflicted with it are covered with filthy running ulcers, and in that state are positively dangerous as the disease is highly contagious. From an erroneous idea that nobody will grow up healthy until it has been undergone, parents like their children to get it whilst still in their infancy. So far from its being beneficent those who have had it suffer from the secondary symptoms all the days of their life. It is principally manifested on the soles of their feet, causing cracks and corns. It impedes a man's marching powers, and it gave me much trouble in my detachment of A.N.C. A few who by lucky chances escaped *thoko* were never so afflicted, and before I left Fiji this fell malady was well in hand, as we had by propaganda and education commenced to get it under. It was about the only thing I really feared in the way of sickness, as all the white men I knew who had caught it never properly recovered and were broken men. One of my schoolfellows, who came out on the staff of Sir Arthur Gordon, was unfortunate enough to get *thoko*. He went home for a while and came back cured, as he thought, but it broke out again and he felt its effects all his life.

After Timothi had told his ghost story and we had heard about *Luilui*, another man spun a yarn about a dreadful snag or tree-trunk washed down by the river floods which haunted the adjacent fords. I am using the plural advisably, as it was never quite certain on which one it would be encountered. It was a notorious nuisance and had a name of its own, *Nduiseng-ata*. If anyone, pressed by the strength of the current, knocked up against it, the *soki*, the after-effects of *thoko*, causing the cracks and corns on the feet, would be very virulent, and the unfortunate who touched it a cripple for the rest of his life.



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I offered to blow it up with a charge of dynamite, but was told such an effort would be but in vain. It was not a real snag and only of a spiritual nature, as it shifted about from ford to ford. When I suggested that this was probably due to natural causes, and it was quite common for the big tree trunks to be washed down the rivers when in flood, I was thrown out of court altogether, as I was gravely informed that as often as not it moved upstream, notwithstanding the fierceness of the mountain torrents.

I have an admirable picture of the great *ndaku* tree where Timothi saw the goddesses. It is a conifer, the *Dammara vitiensis*, closely allied to the Dammara or kauri pine of New Zealand. These trees grow tall and when of mature age have an immense girth. The one in my photograph was twenty-four feet in circumference at the base. It was slightly over a mile from Vunindawa on the main road across the island. These *ndakua* are very bushy and leafy, and their strong stems and stout boughs covered with orchids and thick with parasitical plants, lianes and other wild vines. In the mazes which they form lurk many *tevoro*, and natives, if possible, give these trees a wide berth at night when unfortunate enough to be travelling alone.

Kipling's "Overland Mail," except that there are no tigers or monkeys in Fiji, fitted mine exactly :

"Is the torrent in spate? He must ford it or swim.

Has the rain wrecked the road? He must climb by the cliff.

Does the tempest cry 'halt'? What are tempests to him?

The service admits not a 'but' or an 'if.'

While the breath's in his mouth, he must bear without fail,

In the name of the Empress, the Overland Mail."

I suppose, though, they have done with the Overland Mail now. As I was writing these last lines I received *United Empire*, the Royal Colonial Institute Journal for November, 1921, from which I append this paragraph :

### "FIJI.

"AERIAL EXPERIMENTS.—The Fijian Government has commissioned Mr. Walsh, of the Auckland, New Zealand, Flying School, to experiment with a view to establishing an aerial mail service in the Fijian Group. A cable message has been received from him reporting that he made a flight of 284 miles round Viti Levu in 270 minutes, afterwards circling the island of Vanua Levu in the north of the group."

As may have been gathered earlier in this chapter the Fijians'

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dread of ghosts is more simulated than real. Often when I have been in most out-of-the-way places, far from the beaten track, I have been roused out on dark nights by the arrival of a solitary village constable with my letters. Away from the Overland Mail route letters were passed from village to village by the native police, and daylight or dark, on they had to go in the ordinary course of duty over breakneck paths which I considered appalling in the full light of the sun, and it was generally done by a man alone.

Yes, fine or fair, whether hurricanes blew or floods obstructed the tracks as they wound in and out of the hill streams, the Overland Mail ran its steady course, and only once was it seriously interrupted, and then it was by human passion and not by wind or weather. It was in 1893 after I had been made Resident Commissioner of Tholo North and had taken up my quarters at Nandarivatu. I was also judicial officer for the Ra Province, which executively was administered by a native *Roko*, and was on circuit there holding the Provincial Court at Nakorotumbu, in the northern division. There, into the big house entered two hill men from Nasongo with a large official envelope stuck in the cleft of a stout stem of *sina*, the indigenous spear-grass, which is the native manner of carrying letters. I saw by the expression on the bearer's face that it was what they called a *vola ni tha*, a letter of evil. It was from the *Mbuli* of Mboumbutho, short and to the purpose. "Our minds are distraught. The Government mail is missing, the man who carried it jumped over the precipice opposite Nasongo this morning and is lying nearly dead in the village, and the girl he stole is not to be found." This was followed post haste by another despatch to say that her body had been found dead in a cave in the forest, where, too, the missing mail bag was discovered.

As soon as I could wind up the business in hand I went over to Nasongo to hold a magisterial inquiry, as we call inquests out there, and to investigate the whole affair. Shortly I was told this, that on the day the mail should have turned up it was not forthcoming, and that the people at dawn of the next morning were awakened by the loud singing of a man on the precipice opposite the village. Looking up they saw Kasere, the mail carrier, who belonged to them and who was in jail for adultery with one of their girls. When he saw the people come out of their houses and look up he shouted out, "Kinsmen of mine, good-bye," and then leapt over the grey cliff, there towering some three hundred feet above the river which flows between it and the village. But Providence was kind, and he was caught by the branches of the trees which grow below, and was

carried insensible into one of the houses. There he was still in that condition when I held my inquiry.

The people in searching for the girl saw high up on the mountain-side behind Nasongo a small white flag, and going there found the body of the girl, strangled by a fold of native cloth wound round her throat, and her head pillowed upon the missing mail-bag. When the witnesses were before me they were very exasperating and wanted to tell me every minute detail. By the time the first had got to the mouth of the cave in giving his evidence I began to get impatient, as I had already been made acquainted with the main facts, in the police report. So I said, "When you looked into the cave what did you see?" expecting that the reply would be the corpse, the identification of which I was anxious should be established. Not a bit; the answer was, "The Government Mail," and thereby my soul obtained relief. To him the girl was a *ka wale*, a mere thing, of no value, about which it was absurd to make a fuss, but Her Majesty's Mail was something which had to be reckoned with.

A verdict of wilful murder was recorded against Kasere, the mail carrier, and some three months afterwards, when he had recovered, he was tried before myself and four native assessors, as in those days we did not in Tholo commit such cases to the Supreme Court, but had the proud privilege of hanging our own men. However, it was the only murder case with which I had such a responsibility. A good few Indians were indicted before me for that crime, who were, however, finally dealt with in the Supreme Court, and all I had to do in the matter was to take the depositions and remit the case to the proper quarter.

Kasere's case was a remarkable one. To begin with, none of his bones were broken, and seventeen years afterwards, when I left the Colony, he was a sound and hearty man. Beyond the discovery of the body and the mail bag, of which he was the custodian, there was no direct evidence against him. He, however, made a statement to the Court which amounted in legal terms to a plea of confession and avoidance. He said that he and the girl loved each other, but as he was already married their intercourse could only be illicit. They therefore agreed to commit suicide together. As he approached Nasongo with the mail bag they met and retired to the cave in the forest where the girl's body was found. She said that she would strangle herself, and that he should do likewise, and winding a piece of *masi* round her throat accomplished her part, but when he tried life was too strong within him and he could not manage it. To keep his part of the compact honourably he had

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jumped over the precipice, but fate had been against him and he had failed.

I explained to the assessors that according to English law when two people agreed to commit suicide together and only one did so, the survivor was deemed guilty of murder. I also told them of a case that I had investigated when I first came up into Tholo, in which a man had been found strangled in a small yam house in the bush and about which I had come to the conclusion that death was self-inflicted, and that it was possible for a determined person to commit suicide in such a way. I further set forth that in returning their verdict they should record their opinions as to whether the girl had strangled herself or whether Kasere had done it, at the same time stating that I personally should give him the benefit of the doubt, as from my experience in the case I had quoted to them I thought it possible that the girl might have done it herself. Three of the assessors found Kasere guilty of having murdered her, stating that they were quite sure the girl could not have strangled herself, whilst the fourth took my view.

Technically, according to English law, Kasere was guilty of murder through conspiring to commit suicide with the girl, resulting in her death, and I sentenced him to be hanged. That could not be done until the Governor had signed the death warrant. I sent in my report and asked that the capital penalty should not be given effect to, for the reasons I have given above. But I recommended that in commuting the sentence he should not be let off too lightly, as he had certainly been privy to the death of the girl and his offence flagrant. The result was that his sentence was altered to one of penal servitude for ten years to be served in the jail at Suva, where the discipline was stricter than in the provincial prisons. Convicts in Fiji at that time could earn a twenty-five per cent remission of their term by good conduct. Kasere apparently did not benefit by this privilege, as I did not see him again for the whole of his period. At the time of his release I was in England, and when I came back I found that the people of Nasongo had elected him as their village chief because they thought that his sojourn in Suva Jail had made him a man of the world and more capable of attending to the white gentlemen, at they politely put it, who came their way. They lived on the main road, the first stage out from Nandarivatu, and many travellers passed through their village. I made no objection to the new appointment; Kasere had atoned for his sins and it was quite in accordance with Fijian ideas to let bygones be bygones, and when I left he was a highly respected member of the community.

I had not been many months in Tholo before a great deal of excitement was caused by the return of a woman from the realms of death. She died at Nasongo and was rolled up in a shroud of *masi* around which mats were lashed, the way in which corpses are got ready for burial. Her female friends and relatives sat up and sang dirges in the house where she lay the night before the interment. As they were doing so, in the long and lonely hours before dawn, the body moved and tried to speak. With loud shrieks of terror the frightened women dashed into the village square startling the whole community, who in their turn called upon the *Vakavuvuli* or Wesleyan native teacher to go and still the wayward spirit. With fear and trembling he crawled up to the house in which the corpse was, and with feeble voice begged to be told what the matter was. The corpse demanded to be undone and released from its grave clothes. This was done and she sat up and this is the story she unfolded :

“ I died and found myself upon a beautiful embanked and raised-up road. It was straight and broad, covered with smooth green couch-grass, and bordered on either side with beautiful croton and dracæna plants. Presently I arrived at a place where stood two policemen—the one on the right was dressed in white and the other on the left in black. Behind them, right and left, and at a distance of a fathom apart stood more policemen, those on the right hand in white and those on the left in black. When I arrived there the men asked me where I wanted to go, and I said, ‘ Heaven.’ ‘ Very good,’ they replied, ‘ follow the path right on.’ I went along till I came to a large village surrounded by high walls like unto the looking-glasses of the *vavalang-i*, and there at a gate sat a man in white clothes with a great big book before him and in his hand a pen of gold. He asked me what I had come for and I said that I wanted to go to Heaven. Then he questioned me, ‘ Have you always been a faithful wife ? ’ I replied that I had. Then he looked into the book and said, ‘ What is this I see ? Hell fire is your portion.’ Before I could do anything more one of the black-attired policemen seized me and threw me like an orange to the next man along the left-hand side of the road, and so I was thrown from black-coated man to black-coated man until I came to a great pit in which was a lake of fire in which people were swimming in torment, whilst others had ropes round their middles by which they were dangling in the fiery furnace below. The last of the men in black at the edge of the pit picked up a rope and said, ‘ This is yours, by which you will be lowered into Hell. Now go home and tell your people, and be back here on Thursday.’ ”

I cannot remember the precise day on which the woman came to



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life again, but she obeyed the behest given her by the black-coated custodian of the nether regions and departed this life on the Thursday as commanded. It was a nine-days' wonder, and I was early informed of it by a visit from my reverend friend, Ratu Jona Uluinatheva, the native minister at Nairukuruku. It was the only occurrence of that particular sort which happened in my time. But shortly I shall have to tell of the religion of the *Tuka*, of which Nasongo was a prominent centre, and of the destroying angels and the ministers of healing who made it their headquarters, with their wild and fantastic legends.

A good deal has been written about Fijian death customs and the precautions taken to prevent the return of uneasy spirits to trouble the living. In Tholo I never came across any of them. The chief source of anxiety in the old devil times was the fear that the corpse might be disinterred and eaten. I think in a great measure that was the reason why burials were made in the houses, so that the constant presence of the living could prevent such an indignity. The Noemalu people who did not inter their dead indoors told me that they always concealed the deaths of friends and relatives until they had buried them, and that they did it at night secretly to prevent, if possible, the violation of the graves. When they told me so, I remarked that it was a most horrible and disgusting habit the digging up and eating of the dead. A young man who heard me said that on the contrary it was an act of friendship. When I demanded his reason, and added that I could not see anything in the way of love or friendship, he naïvely replied: "It is like this, suppose you know that anyone has been secretly buried, you slip over to your chum in the next village and give him the tip, and then he and his friends go and help themselves to the corpse."

Ro Seru, whom I have mentioned in the opening chapter as having so kindly offered one of his wives to Mr. Carew, was a regular ghoul and used to wander round the country-side looking for newly buried people. It is said that on finding a grave he could by listening tell whether the body was fresh or stale by the mutterings of the corpse. If of recent interment the sounds were distinctly audible, gradually subsiding into mere whispers, and then finally dying away altogether. According to the early missionaries, human flesh was the only animal food which Fijians would eat when in a state of decomposition, and they would greedily partake of it in any condition. This is corroborated by what the inland people told me themselves.

The Fijians are a most charming people, and many of their friends have tried to make excuses for their cannibalism, saying that it was a religious rite and not often indulged in. In Tholo the subject was

always frankly acknowledged and discussed. I was told that it was all very well for the *vavalang-i* chiefs or white gentlemen to condemn the eating of human flesh, because they had plenty of sheep, oxen and other beasts, whilst the poor Fijian had but pigs, which were few in number, and rats. As a rule they said that they lived on vegetables, but there came a time when they were assailed with a fierce longing for animal food. This great craving they called *kusima*, and when that was on a man the lust of flesh must be satisfied at any cost, and hence the desire for human meat.

Sir Basil Thomson, in "The Last of the Cannibal Chiefs," one of his *South Sea Yarns*, puts the matter thus:

"The word cannibal is associated in our minds with scenes of the most debased savagery that the imagination can picture, of men in habits and appearance a little lower than the brute; of orgies the result of the most degrading religious superstition. It is not until one has lived on terms of friendship with cannibals that one realises that the practice is not incompatible with an intelligence and moral qualities which command respect."

I shall never forget the parting with my old cannibal friends. I use the word old because the youth of my districts, the rising generation, had grown up under the new dispensation, which abhorred the practice. Just before I left Nandarivatu for good the people of the Yalatina tribe came in to take leave of me. I was departing finally, and they had nothing further to hope for or fear from me, yet nothing could have been more tender and affectionate than their farewells. Each brought me some little native article as their *loloma* or love gift, and as they gave them to me they folded me in their arms and kissed me. I wanted to weep badly, especially when I thought of the many occasions in which I had been harsh and unsympathetic with them.

## CHAPTER XXII

### Fijian Water Babies, Cricket, Sorcery & Witchcraft

**L**UVE-NI-WAI, which may be aptly rendered in English as Water Baby or Child of the Water, is a superstition endemic in Fiji. The early Wesleyan missionaries spoke of it in tolerant terms, saying that it was free from any pollution or licentiousness, but that it encouraged idleness, leading to neglect of the cultivation of crops, and when the *Vuninduvu*, as its priests were called, were unskilful or over-daring in their tricks, the consequences were sometimes fatal. In those times the missionaries were too much up against things so infinitely worse that they regarded *Luve-ni-wai* leniently; afterwards, when they had gained the day and established themselves firmly, they denounced it as a heathen game and demanded its suppression, and by their perseverance got the native elders to regard the matter in the same light, and they in their turn reacted on the Government and got the practice made criminal.

Old boys always seem to forget that they were young themselves once, and the Fijian ancients who inveighed against *Luve-ni-wai* ignored the fact that they too, in all probability, were members of it in the days of their youth. It was essentially a pastime for young people, forming a sort of junior republic, an *imperium in imperio*, opposed to the restrictions and restraints of the seniors, who, as they attained old age, found it convenient to forget how they too had kicked against the pricks of authority. It had all the mysteries of a secret society, with occult signs and ceremonial so delightful to juvenile minds. In their eyes it constituted a sort of Freemasonry, jealously to be guarded, which made it extremely difficult to find out what it really was.

It was composed mostly of minor chiefs and young people of restless dispositions eager to make themselves important. Frequently young men of high rank before their accession to power belonged to it, as it gave them the opportunity of intriguing against and annoying those in office. In my time it was the source of much unrest and

turbulence, and led to many embroilments. It alternated in Tholo East with the *Tuka*, which was a most pernicious and seditious superstition intimately connected with ancestral worship, human sacrifices and cannibalism, to an exposition of which I propose to devote the next chapter.

Although the ordinary translation for *Luve-ni-wai* is Water Babies, in Tholo East it had the meaning more of fauns or woodland fairies. The forest everywhere was peopled by them. They were akin to the *Veli* about which I have said something in a previous chapter. Like them they were miniature men, very handsome, with large heads of hair, such as were worn in the old devil days. Many of the votaries told me quite solemnly, when trying to explain that *Luve-ni-wai* was a harmless practice, that they were in the habit of meeting these little creatures in the woods, who were the *ndau ni vuthu* or the poets who taught them songs and dances. The places of these interviews were generally little circles in the forests, like our fairy rings, which were weeded, kept clean and swept with magic fans to the accompaniment of incantations. Upon these secluded spots were laid garlands and bunches of flowers, offerings to the woodland gods. Members of the sect when joining it were given new names, generally after some flower such as *senilolokula* (bloom of the scarlet fig), *seniwatambua* (hoya or wax flower, of which many beautiful varieties are to be found in Fiji), *senitiale* (gardenia), etc. *Se* is the native word for flower.

My first native servants were named Avakuki (Habbakuk) and Vanueli (Phanuel), and the Resident Commissioner always referred to the former as my minor prophet. He was a handsome and engaging boy, but succumbed to consumption whilst quite young and died in my service, to my great sorrow. When I left, after twenty-six years in Tholo, Vanueli, who had grown bald and had become the *Ovisa Mbuli* or Chief Constable of Matailombau, his native district, came to say good-bye to me. He brought a toy *ike* or miniature mallet such as the women use in beating out the bark from which the native cloth is made. It is a handsome little thing made of hard dark wood, and I have it still. It was a mere trifle, and he knew that I should refuse anything really valuable, but he wanted to give me something as a parting present. These two were with me in my first encounters with the Water Babies, and I asked them if they belonged to it. They laughed and confessed that they had tried to raise the devil, as they put it, but had not succeeded. They told me they had hung their little *Mbure* in my compound, where they slept, with flowers and garlands and had swept the magic ring and made the

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incantations. But all in vain ; the spirit had not responded, and they were denied the vision.

Most Fijian customs are of maritime origin and point to the arrival of the race from overseas. The ceremony of *qaloqalovi* or the swimming out to sea with bunches of *tambua* or whales' teeth is the welcome given to chiefs arriving in their canoes off some friendly beach. These terms were also used inland, and when I arrived either on foot or on horseback at the villages I was usually greeted with the *qaloqalovi* or the ceremony of swimming off, and presented with *tambua*. *Luve-ni-wai* is apparently also a term of coast origin where it was believed that the miscarriages of ladies of rank became sprites or water babies, and were the origin of the cult. There is an island in the Rewa delta which was said to be peopled by the premature offspring of the ladies of the chief families of Rewa, one of the small Fijian coast kingdoms that obtained in the old cannibal times.

The native name of New Zealand is *Te ika a Maui* or the Fish of Maui, because that god-like hero pulled it up with his magic hook from the bottom of the sea. He was a veritable *Luve-ni-wai* as may be gathered from Sir George Grey's *Polynesian Mythology*. There in the Legend of Maui it is recounted that when as a small boy he found his way back to his mother, she did not at first recognise him, and tried to drive him from her house and thus the child remonstrated : " Very well, I'd better be off then, for I suppose, as you say it, I must be the child of some other person ; but indeed I did think I was your child when I said so, because I knew I was born at the side of the sea, and was thrown by you into the foam of the surf, after you had wrapped me up in a tuft of your hair, which you cut for the purpose ; then the seaweed formed and fashioned me, as caught in its long tangles the ever-heaving surges of the sea rolled me, folded as I was in them, from side to side ; at length the breezes and squalls which blew from the ocean drifted me on shore again, and the soft jelly-fish of the long sandy beaches rolled themselves round me to protect me."

To this there is a footnote :

" If a child was born before its time, and thus perished without having known the joys and pleasure of life, it was carefully buried with peculiar incantations and ceremonies ; because if cast into the water, or carelessly thrown aside, it became a malicious being or spirit, actuated by a particular antipathy to the human race, whom it spitefully persecuted, from having been itself deprived of the happiness which they enjoyed. All their malicious deities had an origin of this kind."





A CANNIBAL HILL WARRIOR.

A Tholo, or Hill Warrior, of Viti Levu, in the garb of ancient Fiji. His unshorn locks and scanty dress of *malo*, or *masi*, denote that he is still a *tevoro* or cannibal.

*Photo by J. H. Waters, Suva.*



A FIJIAN ALBINO.

The Ndala clan, on whose domains the Hill Station of Nandarrivatu was built, had a legend that as long as there was an albino in the tribe they would retain possession of their ancestral lands.

*Photo by the late W. C. Reay, Esq., District Commissioner, Fiji.*



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In Fiji I never heard that these *Luve-ni-wai* or Water Babies were malignant; on the contrary they seemed friendly little folk.

The further story of Maui is too long to give it in its full continuity; suffice it to say that the child was found on the seashore by his divine ancestor, Tama-nui-ki-te-Rangi, who took him home and nurtured him and then in the words of the legend once more: "When his mother, Taranga, heard all this, she cried out: 'You dear little child, you are indeed my last-born, the son of my old age, therefore I now tell you your name shall be Maui-tiki-tiki-a-Taranga, or Maui-formed-in-the-top-knot-of-Taranga,'" and he was called by that name.

All this is very Fijian, and points to a common Polynesian origin. Whilst *tiki-tiki* is the Maori for top-knot, in Fijian it is rendered *teki-teki*. The latter, too, is a term applied to the flowers which both sexes so coquettishly stick in their hair with a grace which seems peculiar to them, and which sets them off so well. A scarlet hibiscus bloom behind the ear showing up against the dark brown skin adds greatly to the attraction of native beauties. All sorts of flowers are used with a light deft touch which seems a natural instinct. But the wearing of these decorations was strictly forbidden in church by the Wesleyan authorities. I can remember the beadles, those solemnly uniformed Church officials in the England of my boyhood's days, who have now seemingly altogether disappeared. I found them again in Fiji and they exist, I believe, at the present time and are called *Tui Rara*, the old native equivalent of Master of the Ceremonies, which title the early Wesleyan missionaries took unto themselves for the man who kept order in their assemblies. Rasoni was the name of the *Tui Rara* at Nakorovatu when I first went inland. He used to strut about the aisles with a steel ramrod, which he brought down on the backs and shoulders of unruly boys, and as for the girls who came with flowers in their hair, his ruthless hands soon pulled away those offending vanities. But he did it once too often in the days when Mr. Carew was living at Nakorovatu. One of the maidens so treated complained to him and the *Tui Rara* was hailed before the great man, fined and given a scathing disquisition on deportment and manners.

About three miles above Vunindawa, up stream of the Wainimala, is Serea, which used to be the largest village in Tholo East, there dwelt the Wai Kalou, the senior division of the great Soloira tribe. Its other clans lived on the Wai-indina which empties itself into the Rewa just below Viria. Serea was so big that it was divided into three parts, each with a *Turang-a-ni-koro* or mayor of its own. It was full

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of strapping boys and young men when I went to live at Vunindawa in 1884. I soon began to hear rumours that they practised *Luve-ni-wai*, about which I knew nothing then and to which I attributed no importance. But whenever I had occasion to report myself to the Resident Commissioner I was always enjoined to keep a vigilant look out for the superstition. He used to say: "You young fellows who have just come into the Service regard this matter lightly. Of course, everyone is entitled to his own opinion, and mine is that it is most pernicious and to be put down, if possible." Then the Government issued a circular asking us country officials to make inquiries and report on the matter. I duly consulted the elders of my district, who one and all declaimed against the iniquity of it. The *Mbuli* of Matalombau, my near neighbour at Nakorovatu, furnished me by the hands of his district scribe with a written minute on the subject, a most interesting and illuminating document. I was fool enough to send it to the native office, without keeping a copy. I was duly complimented upon having procured so much information and then the paper was pigeon-holed and lost. I never could get hold of it again although I often tried to, to add its contents to my notes. I can recollect, though, the potency of the *Mbuli*'s language and his command of invective. He said that the *Vuninduvu*, the priests, were a disgusting, filthy and idle set, who lived by their wits. They placed bits of sticks in native cooking pots, gave them a shake and then turned out a lot of fat eels for their disciples to eat. Another feat was to jump into one of their earthenware cooking pots and float down the river in it, saying it was their *wanga* (canoe). This must have been a remarkable exercise of *legerdemain* or *legerdepied*, if one may coin a word to fit the circumstance, as although some of the Fijian pots are of a considerable size none is big enough to contain the long legs and ample form of a well-nurtured *Vuninduvu*. They were evidently somewhat acquainted with the art of the conjurer, which is not a bad appellation to be applied to a priest of the *Luve-ni-wai*, and was used by Kingsley in *Westward Ho!* in speaking of the *Piache* or medicine-man of the tribe whom Amyas Leigh and his fellow heroes met on the banks of the Meta. An itinerant conjurer of our own race made his way as far inland as Viria. Some of my Tholo lads saw the performance, and after they had returned home came and told me that it was absolutely unadulterated *Luve-ni-wai*, and added they, "Yet the Government makes it illegal for us to do it."

The Soloiria people were most aristocratic and spoke of their chiefs with terms of double honour; thus the head chief at Serea was

addressed as Ro Ra Angatha, which may be translated as The Noble Lord Angatha. He was old and venerable, a great friend of mine for whom I entertained the sincerest respect. He was the *Vunivalu* or fighting chief of his clan. Associated with him was Tui Waikalou or the Lord of Waikalou, an extremely handsome old gentleman. They and many others of the elders waited upon me one day and said all their young men and boys, amongst whom was the son and heir of Ro Ra Angatha, were practising *Luve-ni-wai* and were altogether out of hand, and would I come to the rescue. I arranged a near day on which to go up to their village and told them to have the boys waiting for me. At the appointed time I went up to Serea, accompanied by Sergeant Naikasau, and found the youths duly assembled in the big *Mbure* in the presence of their elders. I harangued the culprits and pointed out the enormity of their offence. Instead of being met in a conciliatory mood I and the old men were defied, and the ringleader, Pita, replied with a rude and inflammatory speech which roused what the native called "my hot spirit." I told the Sergeant to clap the handcuffs on him and we marched the whole gang, some forty-four in number, down to Vunindawa. There was not room enough in the Provincial Jail and they were camped in the Court House. Neither building had locks or keys and the restraint was only moral. Having got them there the question was what to do with them, as there was then no specific law against *Luve-ni-wai*. However, I thought that the Resident Commissioner had plenary powers to deal with any emergency, so I made my report to him and he came up with all possible speed.

Mr. Carew and the elders met in solemn conclave at Vunindawa and discussed the insubordination of the Serea Water Babies, and in response to the request of the latter it was decided that the youths should be flogged. The station police carried this into effect whilst the parents and relatives of the delinquents stood around and admonished the boys to grit their teeth and take their punishment like men, without howling, as befitted members of the great Soloiria tribe. Unfortunately the highest-born of them, the son of their great chief, Ro Ra Angatha, cried out under the lash to the shame and grief of his father, who was among the spectators.

That was the end of *Luve-ni-wai* in Serea, and strange to say ever afterwards I was the best of friends with the youths there, notwithstanding that I had a very unpleasant task to perform in regard to them. The people there laid claim to a large block of land and their title was rejected almost altogether by the Resident Commissioner. They were only allowed a very small portion, and the greater part fell



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to the rival claimants, who belonged to the Naitasiri Province. There was much bickering and disputing about it, and to settle the matter finally I was directed to cut the boundary line. I frequently had such duties to do, and there was always an element of danger about it, through both sides turning out to see the line run and then starting to dispute with each other. On such occasions there was always the chance of a free fight, but luck was with me and I generally managed to get the work done peaceably. Carew used to say that Fijians were consumed with earth hunger and would go to any lengths to steal a few inches of land. He was admittedly an authority on such subjects, being a member of the Lands Commission and of the Executive Council when it met to hear appeals on land matters. Although the decision in the Serea case was adverse to the people there, they were not noisy and demonstrative as in many other parts. On the contrary they treated me with the greatest kindness and respect. Many years afterwards, in Sir George O'Brien's time, the question arose of a fresh division of districts for executive reasons, and it was decided that Soloira should be attached to the Naitasiri Province. The Serea people petitioned that they might be allowed to remain in Tholo East through their personal attachment to myself. This was acceded to, and only the Wai-indina portion of the tribe went over to the other province.

There were no more *Luve-ni-wai* cases in Tholo East for six years. In 1890 I was sent to relieve the Resident Commissioner of Tholo West, who was going home on urgent private business. I was there for eight months, during which time Tholo East was once more left solely to the Resident Commissioner, who was much too thronged by his Lower Rewa work to be able to look after the hill districts properly. I returned to find the whole province saturated with *Luve-ni-wai* and *Tuka*, and my first duty was to try the youths of Nakorovatu, the next door village to Vunindawa, for practising the former superstition. They were so numerous that they could not be accommodated in the Court House, so the Provincial Court which tried the case sat in the *rara* or public square of the station. Our Attorney-General, the Honourable J. S. Udal and his family, were then on a visit to me, and he was given a seat on the bench. He has written a great deal on Dorset folklore, and the whole proceeding with its romantic setting of the grassy lawn, tall trees and the Wainimala flowing below appealed to him very much. The *Vuninduvu* or seer of the cult assured me that he learnt the songs, dances and ritual of the practice in the depths of the forest from a handsome little *Veli* or fairy. All were found guilty and sentenced to three

months' hard labour each, under the Native Regulation which had been enacted to cope with *Luve-ni-wai* and other kindred superstitions.

All convicted that day were employed in making the bridle track between the Wai-indina and Visari on the western shore of Suva Harbour. I went out with them to survey and lay out the track and practically lived amongst them during the term of their sentence. We dwelt in huts constructed of forest material, every now and then shifting our camp, whilst I went ahead with my Ceylon road-tracer with some of the local villagers as guides. I used to return at night and sleep in the midst of my Lost Legion. I never was treated with the slightest disrespect, and the work was carried out cheerfully. Sergeant Naikasau superintended the earth cutting. I do not suppose that Sergeant Naikasau had more than one or two constables at the most with him.

As long as one had the slightest semblance of right and justice on one's side there was nothing to be feared. Fijians have an innate respect for fair dealing, and I early received a rather strange illustration of this. I was on the Island of Kanduvu for some weeks, having been detained by the non-arrival of the cutter which was to have come for me. The people there are strongly impregnated with Polynesian blood, and are consequently light-skinned, good-looking and inclined to gaiety. The head chief, Tui Na Theva (the Lord of the South), assigned me his own very handsome little sleeping *Mbure* for my quarters, where I was exceedingly comfortable. But it would seem that in every paradise there is a devil, and this was provided by the pet monkey of the chief. Those animals are not indigenous to Fiji, and this particular one had been left by a passing whaler. He was an arrant thief and nightly visited the houses in the village to steal food. I saw him one day chase a girl across the *rara* or public square and catch her by the heel, which he bit. I said he was a beast of a monkey and why was he not killed. "What!" was the reply. "Kill the chief's pet? Impossible!" The little brute went to Church on Sundays and sat on the reading desk or pulpit alongside of the *Vakavuvuli* or native teacher whom he mimicked with an open book in his hands which he pretended to read. Under his arm he carried a cane which he used for the benefit of the dogs who followed their owners to divine service. When any of these began a fight, Jako, as he was called, slowly and solemnly descended from the pulpit, and selecting one of the dogs drove it outside. The people said that *Ra Mangey* or Mr. Monkey was a just beast, as he always knew the dog that started the row and turned him out only. I

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attended some of the services and saw his antics. I was not so charitable and thought him an unmitigated nuisance. That was because he stole my biscuits and other eatables. There were two entrances to my *Mbure*, but no doors for them. When I retired to rest Mr. Monkey used to come and peep round the corner of one of the doorways; then I let drive at him with a missile of some sort or other. Then he would go and squint round the other entrance, and so on till I fell asleep, when he would come in and help himself. He was cunning enough not to attempt to molest me, as he recognised instinctively that I should not scruple to retaliate, and as the natives put it "had no regard for his master's authority which he bore on his shoulders." I was under a different *mana* or power.

About Suva monkeys were called *eng-eli*, which is also the local name for the *Veli* or fairies. When they saw a monkey for the first time they at once said it was akin to their woodland sprites.

After the Resident Commissioner had made his report as to how he had dealt with the Serea *Luve-ni-wai* he was very considerably worried by the Acting Governor, who was then Dr., afterwards Sir William Macgregor. He said that Mr. Carew had exceeded his powers and that such drastic punishment should not have been inflicted. Subsequently, as the Mission authorities and the old Fijians continued to declaim against the practice, a Native Regulation was passed making it illegal and the ringleaders of it subject to imprisonment not exceeding six months with hard labour, and their followers to periods of three months and under.

It is now, 1921, thirty-six years ago since the Serea affair, and looking down that long vista and after much reflection, I think that we took a wrong view of the *Luve-ni-wai*. There was no need to regard it so seriously, as, in my opinion, it was not really seditious. It led the boys to be cheeky and insubordinate, and to a certain amount of larceny. They and their leaders wanted to be sumptuously regaled, and the flocks and herds of the settlers and the pigsties and fowl roosts of their own people suffered in consequence. These repasts always reminded me of the forbidden but delightful bedroom feasts of my own school days. I cannot recall having to steal for them, but it took some ingenuity to smuggle in the prohibited provisions.

There were plenty of Native Regulations against insubordination, disobedience and any sort of disturbance. In fact, it may be said that the Fijians were tied hand and foot by all sorts of enactments. That, however, was their own fault, as they hold endless councils and are fond of passing laws for themselves. We did not need anything special against *Luve-ni-wai*, and could have kept the naughty

boys in order with what had been provided previously. Anyway, we failed to stamp it out, and in my last letters from Fiji I heard that it was still going on in my old districts. I think there is not much harm in it as long as the votaries refrain from picking and stealing and are duly respectful to their elders, and there is certainly a fair element of romance and poetry about it.

It was thought by some that *Luve-ni-wai* was the outcome of the work provided by the Devil for idle hands. When, therefore, many of the village youths took to cricket in some of the districts, I hoped that they were finding an outlet for their superfluous energy and, when requested, gladly consented to become president of the clubs and to subscribe to them. They blossomed forth with gorgeous uniforms, generally scarlet, and it was observed that nearly all the members had some sort of a badge on their right arm, corresponding somewhat to the stripes and chevrons of non-commissioned officers, though no two were alike. Inquiry elicited that the clubs had become sorts of guilds, with books, registers, codes of signals, etc., and that the badges were for the captain, or elder of the guild, as he was called, for the secretary, for the treasurer, for the chief of the outer circle and for the chief of the inner circle. The two latter were for the arrangement of the internal economy and external policy; in fact, a Home Secretary and Secretary for Foreign Affairs. There was another office, too, which to the bewildered outsider could only be translated as "Lord High Admiral." One could only at first think that the lines of Artemus Ward's celebrated volunteer corps were being followed, where, to prevent jealousy, all the members were Major-Generals.

Suspicion soon arose that the clubs were being used as a cloak for the *Luve-ni-wai*, and in one district the members decided to emancipate themselves from the thrall of British rule. With a sincere imitation of it they elected a Governor, Chief Justice, Chief Secretary, and a host of other officials. But a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand, and the weaker has to go to the wall, and the new regime retired awhile for meditation in the quiet and calm of the Provincial Jail.

The play of these clubs was as strange as their general administration and policy. At Nandarivatu the game was played *en règle*, and everything went smoothly till the village clubs came up for matches. One of the set ideas of the latter was that the crack bowler was the bowler, and by prescriptive right. In fact, he was regarded as the Lord High Bowler, and as soon as the over was finished he went on again at the other end. He not infrequently shied, and it was



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considered grossly unfair to score such efforts as no-balls, and defeats were generally ascribed to the partial decisions of an adverse umpire. At a match, a recent settler in the district, an English public school man, was put on to umpire, and proceeded according to established rules. His conduct very gravely disturbed the equanimity of the visiting team, and it was requested that one of their side, who really did understand the game, might replace him.

Happy-go-lucky is the great maxim of native life and stands out everywhere. One of the Inspectors of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, the great Australian Corporation to whose enterprise Fiji owes so much, told me he was going up the Rewa in one of their steam launches. It was the slowest in the fleet, but as he sat in the bows in an easy chair reading the papers, he found that it was slowly but surely overhauling the fastest. He went aft to look at the engine and found out that the Fijian boy who was driving it had compressed the safety-valve down with a crowbar. My friend got very excited and said, "We may be blown to smithereens at any moment," and remonstrated violently with the youthful driver. "*Veitalia*" (never mind), retorted he; "who cares as long as we beat the other boat."

Even at Nandarivatu, where there were always English officers, it was hard to keep the comic element out of our cricket. When a duffer went to the wicket the field would pretend that he was a turtle and that they were the fishers and would feign to encircle him with the net and would intone the chant with which they haul it. They were mighty sloggers, too, and smashed bats wholesale. A boy's ordinary bat cost five shillings in Sydney in those days, and by the time we got it after freight, duty, etc., it stood us in seven shillings at least. That was a month's pay of a private in the A.N.C., and it did not leave much for club subscriptions, so we were always in a state of chronic bankruptcy. Some of the men played really well, and I tried to reserve the best bats for them, but that design was killed by ridicule. When a wicket fell and the next man followed on in our Saturday afternoon pick-up matches, he would be politely offered one of the good bats, and if he were not one of the élite, he would say, "Oh, no; that is the *tambu-tara* (forbidden to be touched) and is not for the likes of me. Here, give me the *vavakoso* (all sorts and conditions) bat; that is the sort of chap I am!"

It is a far cry, doubtless, from cricket to witchcraft, but our national game got mixed up with *Luve-ni-wai*, which is made up of mystery and magic, and in the native mind is very much akin to *ndrau-ni-kau*, the Fijian for sorcery and its affiliated practices. In English the word means simply the *leaf of the tree*. That is because



all incantations and spells are formed from leaves in different shapes and forms.

The old beach-combers used solemnly to assert that the Fijians were adept poisoners, and they succeeded in impressing some of our early writers with their views. I read in one of their books, I forget which, that when one wished to be rid of an enemy the intervention of a professional poisoner was sought who contrived to introduce something noxious into the victim's food, which speedily sent him on his way to the next world. That was not the way the *matai drau-ni-kau* (skilled herbalist) worked. The usual manner was to get a collection of leaves together, and other things, some of the latter pretty filthy, mix them up and put them in a small hollow bamboo. That was generally planted under the door-sill of a house, so as to show a disturbance in the soil there. The owners would at once know what had happened, and digging would find the spell. Then the person whom it was supposed to be intended for would take to his bed, with his face to the wall and in all probability die of fright. That was the common form, and I have tried many professional sorcerers for it. Early in the day we found out what a disturbing and dangerous doctrine witchcraft was, as it led to fights and reprisals, so much so that a very drastic Native Regulation was enacted, under which the wizards could be awarded forty lashes and two years' hard labour.

I heard my first case of *ndrau-ni-kau* very soon after I took up my quarters at Vunindawa. The accused was a very powerful and much-feared practitioner of the art, who lived in the district of Nailenga on the Upper Wainimbuka. Whilst it was being tried the Court adjourned at noon for the usual recess. I was taking a brief rest in my bungalow when one of my young constables rushed up with wide-opened eyes distended like saucers and said, "*Saka*" (Sir), "all of us on this station are going to die. I saw the wizard put two packets of leaves in the ditch round the jail, and that will kill us all." I got him to show me the place where this dire deed had been done. He would not come near, but pointed it out from afar, and there I found two little packets of dried leaves neatly packed one upon another. I picked them up and took them to my house, where they lay on my table for some time. The accused told me that he was only using them medicinally, and that as they had done their work he just threw them away. However, they did not enter into his case, and he was convicted of the offence upon which he had been originally indicted.

There are many forms of witchcraft, one of which is called the

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"Spell of the Plantain." In that case a sucker is procured, which is taken to some lonely spot in the forest and planted at night by the light of a full moon. It is put into the ground with many spells and incantations, and with many curses on the victim whom it is to affect. It is clubbed, speared and knocked about, and as it suffers so will also the person it represents. Nightly it is visited and subjected to further tortures, and as it wilts and dies so will the creature for whom it undergoes this evil treatment. Old Ndavelevu, who confessed to having strangled his mother, told me of this particular incantation. He was always in mortal fear of spells and used to remind me of the nigger in *Huckleberry Finn*, who went about with his woolly hair plaited up into little wisps in his efforts to scare witches away.

These sorcerers were useful sometimes. One of the planters on the Ra coast had a large grove of coco-nut trees. They do not flourish very well on Viti Levu, although they do on the other islands, and *copra* or their dried kernels is a very large Fijian export. As they were a bit scarce on Viti Levu, the natives used to help themselves to the planter's nuts, and he never could catch any of the thieves. He was a cute, longheaded Yankee, and it struck him that he would call in a sorcerer to his aid. There was one quite handy who was the owner of a spell called *ndrimu*. That is the name of a painful skin disease akin to eczema, and anyone coming under this particular incantation got the disease. After that the palm grove was left untouched.

During the time I was acting Stipendiary Magistrate at Mba there was a professor of *ndrau-ni-kau* who gained quite a reputation with the Indian coolies. They call magic and sorcery *jadu*, and the man who practises it *jadugar*. Just before I was stationed there the store of an Indian trader had been burgled, and the police quite failed to detect the culprits. The owner was a Madrasi, and the only one of two natives of Hindustan whom I ever knew to have Fijian wives. Universally they despised the natives, whom they called *jangali*, and to such an extent that they never even formed temporary liaisons with them. In this case the wife advised her husband to consult the local sorcerer. It happened that the robbery had been committed by Fijians, and the professor was able to give the correct tip and the thieves were apprehended and convicted. For a while the *jadugar* had a long Indian clientele, but the bubble soon broke, as he never afterwards gave any useful information.

There was one poisonous plant which the Fijians occasionally used on the northern coasts. It is called *længyengye*, to which

love-sick damsels, who fancied themselves tired of this life, resorted, with not much faith, however, as they generally supplemented it with soap-suds and tobacco juice from which they made a horrible decoction. It caused violent vomiting, and that, I suppose, was the reason it hardly ever proved fatal. I only knew of one case in which it was supposed to have been so—a girl of Waikumbukumbu, the village at the foot of the hills upon which Nandarivatu stands. As there was no doctor available for a post-mortem it was uncertain if it was really the cause of death in that instance. As far as I know, it was only used in self-administered cases, although one day, when I was walking with a local chief, he stooped down and picked a piece of the plant and showed it to me, saying, "That is what we give to people to whom we are badly disposed, and it does for them." I investigated attempts at suicide from it, but never any other case of poisoning, so I have come to the conclusion that, like the phantom black snakes that troubled the people of Rewasau, Fijian poisonings were only spiritual, not real, and chemical analysis would fail to discover any ground for suspicion that death was due to poison.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### Tuka, the Life Immortal

THE Serea *Luve-ni-wai* event occurred in the early months of 1885 and for some little while after what the Fijians call *sautu* prevailed—that is, peace and plenty. With them there is no peace unless accompanied by plenty, and a proper plenty means profusion. No great gathering or feast was considered a success unless much of the food was wasted and the locality where it was held stank with the refuse. With their love of hyperbole, that was the way they put the matter. I once met a strange Fijian and got into conversation with him about his village and asked him what sort of a place it was. “Oh!” replied he, “it is magnificent; you cannot step outside the houses without sinking knee-deep into pig-dung!” Pigs, as has already been remarked, are one of the chief treasures of the native, and my new acquaintance wanted to impress me with the wealth and importance of his birthplace.

Then rumours began to come through that all was not well in the district of Muaira concerning which the Resident Commissioner always had some misgivings, and frequently told me that they were a wild and turbulent lot, having taken part in the fighting against the troops of King Thakombau just before we hoisted our flag in 1874. The *Mbuli* or head man had forsaken his lawful spouse and taken up with a young girl to the great scandal of the free and independent electors. The native magistrate at Narokorokoyawa wrote to say that the injured wife had impleaded her offending husband in the Provincial Court and would I come up and try the case with him. We arranged to meet at Undu, in the Muaira District, at the junction of the Wainimala and Wailoa Rivers and hold the sessions there. I started off in my *takia*, the “Causer

of Sleep," in a leisurely manner one afternoon and put up with my friend Ratu Jona, the native minister at Nairukuruku, eight miles up stream. There I received a letter from the Wesleyan teacher at Undu to say that strange things had been occurring, that a body of troops, the followers of one Navosavakandua, had come over from the adjoining province of Ra and had been undergoing a course of drill under certain *satini*, which is the Fijian adaptation of our word sergeant. I had not heard of the gentleman before, and so began to make inquiries and found out that he was a prophet of sorts gifted with great mystic and occult powers, able at any time to separate his spirit from his body, and leaving the latter in his native home visit other places in his astral form. It was the time of Madame Blavatsky, of whom a good deal had appeared in the old *Saturday Review*, which in those days I used to read regularly. There seemed much resemblance between what she preached and that which Navosavakandua was said to be doing. I despatched a special messenger to the Resident Commissioner immediately to ask whether he could give any information as to this (to me) newly risen star.

The reply was prompt and decisive; yes, the Commissioner knew the gentleman quite well, that he was extremely dangerous and wanted watching closely. He was the exponent of a new doctrine that the world would be shortly *tavuki*, which is the Fijian for being turned upside-down, and when that occurred all existing affairs would be reversed; the whites would serve the natives, the chiefs would become the common people and the latter would take their places. Some time previously he had inflamed the interior of Viti Levu with these ideas, creating great excitement, and almost causing the cessation of ordinary work and routine in the expectation of that great and wondrous day when the world would be judged. As will be shown presently he had compounded a new religion of the old Fijian myths and what he had read in the Bible.

I found Undu thronged with all the chiefs and notables of Lomai Tholo, the name for the confederation of the five clans which occupied the dead-central region of Viti Levu. Such an event as the trial of one of their *Mbulis* was not to be missed, and the whole place was agog with excitement. Although the Wesleyan teacher stoutly maintained that troops owing allegiance to the great Navosavakandua had been drilling there the villagers averred that what he had seen were merely ordinary dances performed by visitors, friends and kinsmen from the Ra Province. I knew that the *Vakavuvuli* or teacher was telling me the truth, and I wondered what would happen when it came to the trial of the Chief of Muaira, as the teaching of



Navosavakandua was distinctly inimical to the Government, and I did not know how far the *Mbuli's* followers might be infected with it.

The case came on and the *Mbuli* entered with his paramour, the former with a good deal of swagger and bluster, and the latter proud of her conquest of the principal notability of those parts. She was bedecked with much native finery and flaunted the amber mouth-piece of a pipe in the slit of her ear, the gift of her high-born lover. Both pleaded guilty to the information filed against them, and Vuthang-o, the male delinquent, was sentenced to a year's hard labour in Suva Jail, the maximum penalty, to show that the law was no respecter of persons and that the offence of one in high authority, as he was, had to be dealt with more stringently.

The Court then adjourned in order that the state of affairs in Muaira might be dealt with. The Resident Commissioner had given me instructions as to what was to be done in the case of a conviction. I convened an assembly of the notables and installed Roko Tui Vuna, the cousin of the deposed man, as *Mbuli* Muaira. He was acclaimed as the head man and remained in that position until I left Fiji in 1910, a period of twenty-five years, subsequently retiring upon a pension.

To allay excitement and any possible display of sympathy I ordered the removal of Vuthang-o to Vunindawa at once on the first stage of his journey to Suva. He went off on a *takia* like a lamb, accompanied by two constables. My youngest brother, who was but a boy and was on a visit to me, went in the same canoe. I did not know what was ahead of me and I wanted to get him safely away. He was most indignant to think that a man should be sent to jail for an affair with a lady, and the last I saw of the couple as they walked out of the village together to the point of embarkation was that they were fraternising, and *en route* they became the best of friends. Vuthang-o did his year, and on his return settled down as a country gentleman and never gave me any more trouble, in fact afterwards, in our noisy and factious little local parliaments, I could always count upon his support in measures that I wished to carry.

We finished up our general jail delivery, and I set to work to try and find out something about the emissaries of Navosavakandua, who had lately visited Undu. Nobody would tell me anything, but I held on and remained doggedly there. I was having my morning dip in the Wailoa one day when the *Turang-a ni koro* or village head man announced that he had come to make a full breast of the

affair. Evidently he had become frightened and wanted to get his tale in first, before anyone else could give information. Yes, it was quite true, those that had been at Undu were *sotia* (soldiers) of Navosavakandua, drilled by their *satini* or sergeants, who had come over to spread his doctrine.

This was called the *Tuka*, which is derived from the verb *tu*, to stand upright, and *ka*, a thing, and means that which stands for ever and hence immortality. Most words denoting force and power contain some form of *tu*, such as *nitu*, a god, or that which perpetually stands; *tui*, a king; *ratu*, a lord; *turanga*, a chief, and a long string of others too numerous for mention.

*Navosavakandua* means "he who speaks but once," and is the term applied by the Fijians to the Chief Justice, as there is no appeal against his decision, and he alone sentences men to death, and he is considered as an awful and dread personage. Sir Fielding and Lady Clarke came to visit me in 1888 when he was our Chief Justice, just prior to his departure to Hong Kong. They went with me to the morning service one Sunday at Nakorovatu and the church was simply packed with men, women and children, many of the latter being babies in arms who squalled outrageously. When we came out I asked the *Mbuli* why we had been so thronged, and the reason of the presence of so many infants. "Oh!" replied he, "they all wanted to see the gentleman who holds the breath of life in his hands and at whose command people live or die. The mothers could not leave their babies and were determined not to lose the wondrous sight, and so brought them along with them." I think it will have been gathered that it does not take long to make a myth in Fiji, as witness the story of the prize-fight on the A.N.C. parade ground, and the arrival of the new mail-steamer the smoke from whose funnels turned day into night. Another greatly-to-be-feared official came to stop with me, the Superintendent of Prisons, who was also Governor of Suva Jail and High Sheriff of the Colony, and as such responsible for the hanging of those upon whom the sentence of death had been passed. We went out for a walk together and came upon a body of tribesmen road-making, who immediately stopped working and gazed intently upon my companion. I observed that my native lieutenant, Naikasau, who had by that time attained commissioned rank, was indulging in a quiet snigger and I asked him what the joke was. He said that everybody was most interested in the strange gentleman with me, as he it was who spoke the awful words that sent men to their doom by the use of one particular phrase. I asked what that might be

and was told, "Let go!" My friend Milne told me that that was simply a myth, as on such occasions he never spoke a word but just dropped a handkerchief as a signal for the drop to fall.

The real name of the prophet of the *Tuka* was Ndoongumoy, but from his supposed infallibility, Navosavakandua, the title of the Chief Justice was also conferred upon him, and by it he was universally known. Before my arrival in Tholo he had been deported to one of the smaller islands for a period of two years for disturbing the peace of the Queen's lieges in the hill country of Viti Levu. That term had expired, and he had come home with still more wondrous tales than he had spread before. He said that the Government tried to put him to death but in vain; his divine *mana* (power) had always come to his rescue and saved him. So at last it had given up the struggle, but during his return voyage it made one last attempt. When full abreast of Nakauvandra, the Sacred Mount, they bound him to the anchor of the inter-insular steamer on which he was with the chain cable, which was also twined round his neck. So encumbered he had been cast into the sea, but he swam ashore at Natuilau, one of the northern points of Viti Levu, and from thence had walked inland to his native village in the vicinity quite unscathed.

He promised eternal life to those who would follow him, and that they should never know death. Those who were already old were promised the renewal of youth, the return of desire, and perpetual pleasure on the great day in which the world should be turned upside-down. That was at hand, and all those who did not believe on him would become the slaves and servants of his faithful disciples. He was the herald of two of the ancient chiefs of Fiji, the sons of Rokola, the carpenter-god, who had built the *Tamunamuna*, the first canoe, on which had sailed away his boys into the vast and unknown ocean to escape the wrath of the Ndeng-ei, the great serpent god. The Bible was true, but the missionaries had deceived the people by talking about Jehovah and Jesus Christ, their real names being Nathirikaumoli and Nakala-sambaria, and on their return they would bruise the head of Ndeng-ei, who was in reality the old serpent the Devil. Their advent was imminent, said Navosavakandua, and the white men knew it, and one had only to watch them to see how anxious they were. They were always looking through telescopes pretending to survey land, but in reality they were looking out for the return of the young gods. The officers of H.M.S. *Alacrity* were then charting the northern coast near to the prophet's home, and whilst the surveyors

ashore pretended to measure land the little man-of-war watched the shores. It would take a whole book to recount the farrago of nonsense he talked, all of which was implicitly believed by the simple hill-folk. I only heard of one man, a coast chief, the *Mbuli* of Tavua, treating the matter with any degree of sanity. When he was visited by some of the prophet's preachers he took a plate and smashed it into little pieces. Then he turned to the recounters of the miracles performed by their head and said, "By a word restore that plate to its original condition and I will become one of your followers."

It is difficult to discriminate between grim earnest and childishness in many phases of Fijian life, and I have never been able to make up my mind as to these soldiers of the prophet, whether he expected any real material support from them or whether they were merely part of a great game. They were armed only with clubs and spears, but Navosavakandua's destroying angels were reputed to be able to call down fire from heaven and so destroy their enemies. One of those who turned Queen's evidence told me that these awful personages used to recount their visions of clouds full of flaming chariots. I asked him what a chariot was like as I knew that the ordinary Fijian had not the faintest conception of such a thing. My informant scratched his head and replied that he did not know but that it was part of the business. It reminded me of a sermon I heard in a remote part of Tholo on the death of Absalom. I have already told about one, but this is another in which the preacher said: "Now Absalom was riding a mule; what sort of a thing that is I do not know, but I am given to understand that it is an animal that jumps."

There is one of our institutions that Fijians greatly admire and that is military drill. Their own war dances consist of evolutions carried out by word of command, and their handling of spear and club resembles somewhat our manual exercises. When enlisted in the regular force of the Colony they learnt the drill speedily, and delighted in it. I have heard frequently recruits in the barracks drilling each other at night time, and so they went on until absolutely perfect. More especially do they excel in the bayonet exercise. In 1895 Nandarivatu was visited by Sir Henry Berkeley, the Acting Governor, who came round in H.M.S. *Pylades* with Captain Adams, R.N. They rode up from the coast on our hill ponies and were, of course, received with the customary guard of honour, and subsequently there was a review and an inspection of our little force. Sixteen years after I met Captain Adams in his



home in Devonshire, and he pulled out an old diary and read from it: "Inspected the Armed Native Constabulary at Nandarivatu. They did the bayonet exercise as well as the Marines, which is saying not a little." His comment to me was that a long interval had elapsed since the occurrence, but that the extract he had read was the impression made upon him at the time.

The young N.C.O's. of the A.N.C. were the acme of smartness and greatly admired by their fellow countrymen and women, and to be a sergeant was the ambition of the ordinary youth, and Navosavakandua was in all probability urged by his followers to have something to show off with. It was quite feasible barring the rifles, uniform and equipment, as many of his votaries had done their terms of service in the ranks of the A.N.C. and knew company drill perfectly. The natives everywhere have adopted the military salute as their method of showing respect, and I used to be accorded it with variations wherever I went. I was much amused one day by the arrival of Mbamba, whom I had sent to jail and who rose to be the chief messenger in the Colonial Secretary's Office, as mentioned in a previous chapter. After his return home he was made the Chief Constable of Mboumbutho and turned up with some reports whilst I was out road surveying with a small party of A.N.C. He strode up to me and at the regulation four paces delivered the salute with proper precision. Afterwards we broke off for lunch, and as we sat taking it amidst the bracken I heard a conversation going on evidently intended for my benefit. Said one man: "Who was that fellow who came up and saluted as if he were one of us?"—"Oh!" answered another, "I think I have seen him in Suva carrying about the Colonial Secretary's letters." "Well, what right has he to give the military salute? Does not every one know that it is the special privilege of the A.N.C. conferred by our Great Chief the Governor? If our officers will not take the matter up, why we men must give the offenders something to remember us by."

Having procured the name of those who were illegally drilling at Undu, in the lightness of my heart and inexperience I issued warrants for their arrest and turned out the *posse comitatus*, otherwise the village police of Lomai Tholo, to effect the arrests, whilst I with my two regular constables remained in reserve. It was not long before the local levies returned with their tails between their legs, and dreadful stories of how they had been resisted by the disciples of the *Tuka* and chased from their strongholds. It was doubtful how far my men were in sympathy with those whom



they were sent to apprehend, and I did not know then what I do now. The Fijian enactment creating Stipendiary Magistrates made their warrants run throughout the Colony, but the natives held the old English idea that only the writs of the justices of their particular provinces could be enforced in them. All who have read Conan Doyle's celebrated tale, *Rodney Stone*, will know how process in the olden times was only effective in the county in which it was issued, and before offenders who had fled to another could be apprehended the warrant had to be *backed* by the authorities of the venue where they had taken refuge. Without any legal knowledge that was precisely the view the Fijians held, and it may be attributed to their narrow tribal feelings and want of patriotism to their country in general. Now that is beginning to change owing to education and the facilities of intercourse under the King's Peace, whereby all parts can be visited without fear of being knocked on the head, and a national sentiment is taking the place of the old tribal idea.

My wise old notables who had assembled at Undu to greet and assist me, if possible, wagged their hoary pates and wondered whatever would happen next. I was decidedly of the opinion that I had better seek the aid and advice of the Resident Commissioner, so off I went to him at Nandurulolo, made my report and returned to Vunindawa, which involved a river journey by *takia* of over one hundred miles.

Sir John Thurston, the Governor, took a very serious view of the matter, and I was instructed to report direct to him and keep him closely in touch with the *Tuka* movement. The Resident Commissioner came up to Vunindawa and with him Ratu Peni Tanoa, the *Roko Tui* or Lieutenant-Governor of the adjacent province of Naitasiri, with his feudatories in support. The *Roko Tui* Ra, in whose jurisdiction lived Navosavanakandua and his satellites, was also directed to turn his levies out, arrest and bring over the Prophet and those who had been drilling at Undu. For some days Vunindawa resounded to the tramp of the club and spear men who answered to the rally, and those who had the audacity to resist the warrants of the *Matanitu* were brought in and delivered into my custody. Amongst them were two of Navosavakandua's destroying angels. Tauvoli was one of them, but I cannot recollect the name of the other. They were old men of the priestly caste, and wholeheartedly in support of the ancient regime. Ratu Peni Tanoa, the *Roko* of Naitasiri, was the grandson of King Thakombau, and he it was who made the comparison of the Fijian Islands being

like the strange shapes that molten lead assumes when thrown into cold water. He was a ward and protégé of Mr. Carew and an extremely lively and intelligent young gentleman. My judicial functions had now passed to my superior officer, the Resident Commissioner, and I only acted as his executive officer in charge of the station routine work and was responsible for the safe keeping of the prisoners. We had no proper lock-up or jail, and I was very anxious lest the destroying angels should effect their escape. I kept them in my own quarters, and the night before their trial I sat up with them. Ratu Peni kept me company and was tremendously interested in their supposed powers, and asked if it was really true they could call fire down from heaven and destroy us all. They assured him that they could, but out of consideration for his distinguished presence they would not use them for such a fell purpose. The next day all those who had come over to Undu and disturbed the Peace of Her Majesty the Queen, her crown and dignity, were tried by the Resident Commissioner under an old English statute for illegal drilling, and sentenced to short terms of hard labour and despatched to the Central Jail at Suva.

Navosavakandua was not amongst those who had been drilling at Undu and apparently there was some difficulty in effecting his arrest, as he was not brought down to Vunindawa until after the destroying angels and the others had been disposed of. It was quite a thrilling moment when he arrived under the escort of a picturesque guard, armed with club and spear. A retinue came with him, including a number of female attendants who were known as *Alewa ni Lemba* or Lemba women. I never was quite able to make out what *Lemba* exactly meant, but Carew told me that nearly all the greatest blackguards he knew amongst men were called *Roko Lemba*. I knew one myself, one of the *Tuka* leaders who answered to that name. The girls told us that they were sick of the Prophet and were tired of continually preparing *kava* for him. He was certainly not much to look at, being very black and of a decidedly Melanesian type. He looked bilious and overfed, and had a dazed far-away look as if he was continually under the influence of narcotics. Undoubtedly he was always more or less stupid with unlimited drinking of *yangona* and smoking of coarse, rank native tobacco. The latter alone produces what the Fijians call *matene*, which means intoxication. I know nothing that will make one's head reel more than a good strong *seleuka* or native cigarette.

Navosavakandua, not having committed any actual overt offence in Tholo, was sent down to Suva and from thence was relegated to

his own province of Ra. There he was charged on two informations with conduct calculated to create a breach of the peace, and tried before the Stipendiary Magistrate. I went over to attend the Court, not as a judicial officer, but to watch the case from my special knowledge of *Tuka*. The Prophet was brought round from Suva in the twelve-oared barge of the Commissioner of Native Affairs and landed at Rukuruku at the head of Viti Levu Bay. I went up in a *takia* to the head of canoe navigation on the Wainimbuka and walked over to the northern coast and met my colleague of Tai Levu and Ra. The Prophet was found guilty and sentenced to six months' hard labour on each charge. If ever I saw a change come over a man's face I did so in Navosavakandua's. The coxwain of the barge in which he had come round was a minor Mbauan chief, Ratu Rusiate, and he and the rest of the crew had thoroughly rubbed it into their prisoner that I was sure to get him hanged. Therefore when he heard that he was only to have a year in jail he took fresh courage and hope, and life was once more worth living. Immediately sentence had been pronounced H. L. Tripp, my brother magistrate, ordered the prisoner's hair to be cropped, and it was promptly done and I was an eye-witness of the fact. Yet when I got back to Vunindawa rumour had preceded me, and I was told that we failed to accomplish that impious crime as when the scissors were applied to that sacred head they refused to perform their office, and bent backwards rather than commit such a sacrilege. In the chapter on the Lost Legion and in my remarks about Fijian prisoners generally I should have said that the shearing of the locks of those unfortunates who came within the grasp of the law was the cruellest sting, much harder to bear than imprisonment. Natives are immensely proud of their hair, giving much time and attention to its care and beautification, and I have already tried to explain how the divine power or *mana* centres in one's head and what a dire offence it is for any to touch it except those whose office it is, such as the hereditary priests, *vide* the case of the Reverend Thomas Baker, who snatched his comb from the fuzzy locks of his slayer. When I was alone with my men in the hills one of the young chiefs used to cut my hair, but after doing so he always clapped his hands and went through the native form of respect and obeisance.

Not only was I told that we failed in trying to crop the sacred locks of the divine Navosavakandua, but that we only spared his life because we knew we could not kill him. If the Government could have done so they would have long ago. Bringing him back from his

first exile, as has already been told, he was heaved overboard with an anchor and chain round his neck, but all in vain. Then when his *sotia* were tried and convicted at Vunindawa, we had sent him to the big central sugar mill at Nausori and had tried to make an end of him by passing him through the massive rollers which crushed the canes. There, like the scissors, the dreadful machinery refused to harm the hallowed victim. After that there remained but one other recourse by which to stop his life. In those days there was only one monthly steamer to and from the outside world, via Sydney, the old *Gunga*, which was a household word, well known even through the remote hills, for in the earlier times a gang of Government gentlemen, as the prisoners called themselves, used to discharge and load her. So the news came up-country that the cruel authorities once more sought the death of their illustrious charge by dropping him down the funnel of the old packet. But he swam through the fires and cut through the furnace doors as if he had been taking a dive into a pool in the stream at his home in the hills.

After Navosavakandua's year was up he was banished for the space of ten years to Rotumah, the small island dependency of Fiji, four hundred miles northwards. "Quite so," said his disciples. "For the present it is given to the *Matanitu* to have him in their grip; it is their hour, but his will come at the last and great day when all things shall be turned upside-down. But it is quite evident that Navosavakandua has the gift of immortality, otherwise the Government would have killed him; not being able to do so, it has sent him far away across the deep ocean; but he will return again."

As for myself, I said in my mind, "Exit the prophet," and I thought I had done with him for at least a considerable period. But I spoke in my ignorance and foolishness of heart. Although the Government had seen to the detention of his body in far away Rotumah, it was not able to restrain his free spirit, and his astral form returned to his native hills and comforted his adherents by ministrations, and his doctrine of the *Tuka* exists to this present day.

As a matter of fact, he did not find his exile too irksome, and he found consolation in one of the pretty straight-haired girls of Rotumah, whom he took to wife. By the time his sentence had expired I had succeeded Mr. Carew in Tholo East, and was also judicial officer of the Ra Province, the district in which was the home of the prophet. I was asked by the Government if I had any objection to his return, and I replied that I had none whatever; that, on the contrary, I thought that it would be a very good thing



to let him come home again and let his people see him. Whilst the country of the *Tuka* was under my control I felt that I could cope with it, and I felt curious to see how his disciples would regard him after his long absence, and how he would behave. But, alas ! he died almost immediately upon the order for his release. I communicated the news to his kinsmen and followers, but I think that they did not believe me. It was a convenient fabrication to permit of the Government getting out of a tight corner. It had tried to put the prophet to death and had failed, and he had to be disposed of in some way or other, and it was a good plausible lie to say that he had departed this life.

But as I have already said, the *Tuka* still goes on. We all regret our lost youth, and nobody more than old Fijians, who long passionately for rejuvenation and a return of early joys and pleasures. The leading lights of the cult were principally the old hereditary priests, and in addition to wishing to regain their physical powers they also earnestly desired once more to enjoy their sacerdotal privileges. There was a great deal of poetry and romance interwoven with the superstition ; there was a fountain of life, the drinking of whose waters conferred immortality, and a house of sleep and pleasant dreams. I have seen the latter at a village called Lamisa, in the Kuvandra country, the mystic land. It was but a simple *Mbure*, but the local *Tuka mbete* or priest had cast a cunning spell upon it, by which those that reposed therein had the sweetest repose and delightful visions.

Notwithstanding the miraculous powers of Navosavakandua, his destroying angels and soldiers, I doubt whether there would have been any actual overt acts of opposition against law and order, but it had one great danger. The people were all agog waiting for the last day and the reversement of all existing institutions, when they would take the place of the dominant whites and their own hereditary chiefs. The great *tavuki* or upheaval was constantly being predicted, and the expectant people were as constantly disappointed. Why did it not come ? That was a question easily answered : the gods had not been propitiated by the customary sacrifices, the spilling of human blood.

Sergeant Jesoni (Jason) for many years was my right-hand man in the judicial administration of the Ra Province, and in charge of the police station at Rakiraki. He was a zealous officer and a pillar of the Wesleyan Church, in which he was a lay preacher. After many years of service he retired on a pension, and died shortly before I left Fiji, after a long illness. When I used to ride up the



long Ra coast after he had been invalided, he generally tried to await me on the road to pay his respects. Yet when he died, a man who was present told me that almost the last words he said were that the *Tuka* was the true religion. But then his native village was within the shadow of the Holy Mountain of the Kauvandra, and notwithstanding his Christianity he was saturated with the dominant superstition of that part of the country.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### The New Religion

**F**IJIANS jump to conclusions quickly, and when they observed resemblances between the Christian religion and their own traditions they stoutly averred that the faith introduced by the white missionaries was no new thing, and that they had known about Jehovah from all time. It was no use my telling them that it was impossible ; they made my head reel with their fantastic distortions. The great Ndeng-ei, who, as his whim seized him, was either a man or a snake, was without doubt the Devil, the old serpent, and as he in his wrath had driven away the two young chiefs from the god-land of Viti, he was the enemy of mankind, whose seed should bruise his head when the banished heroes returned from their long exile. Their father, Rokola, the tutelary genius of the carpenter clan, who built the canoe on which they sailed away was, of course, Noah. Arguments on the subject were like nightmares, as my opponents indiscriminately used the Fijian and Biblical names, alternating them with each other in such a manner that I hardly knew where I was.

Nandurutamata, the man post, the uncle of Sergeant Naikasau, gave me this version of the creation of man :

“Formerly there were two gods, Jehovah and Ndeng-ei, and at one time they had a dispute. Ndeng-ei said, ‘Jehovah, pay obedience to me.’ Jehovah replied, ‘Ndeng-ei, serve me. Do you not know that I am the Supreme Chief and Lord of Heaven?’ To this Ndeng-ei answered, ‘What, Jehovah, are you a god?’ Then said Jehovah, ‘What ! Ndeng-ei, are you a god? What are you a god of? If you are, make man.’ Ndeng-ei took earth and moulded and fashioned it into the likeness of a man. Then Jehovah said, ‘Tell it to stand up,’ and Ndeng-ei said to the earth he had shaped, ‘Earth, stand up,’ but the earthen form remained still and quiet.

When Ndeng-ei had finished his work he said, ‘Jehovah, if thou art a god make man of this earth.’ So Jehovah kneaded the earth and formed a man and then a woman. When he had finished fashion-

ing both, Ndeng-ei said, 'Tell them to stand up.' Then Jehovah thought, 'What shall I do to accomplish a living man? I will endow him with a soul and with breath.' So he stooped down and caused his spirit to enter the man first and afterwards the woman, and he breathed into them. Then Ndeng-ei said once more, 'Tell them to stand up.' And Jehovah said to the two earthen forms, 'Stand up,' and they stood up.

After that Jehovah said, 'Ndeng-ei, what are you god of? If you are a god tell your earthen forms over there to stand up. To-day you have seen me create man from earth only.'

After that the human species multiplied and Jehovah drove Ndeng-ei away. Then Jehovah said to his people, 'It is good that you should build a house, an extremely lofty one, whose summit shall reach to heaven, of which it shall be the key and from whence life immortal shall be given to you.' Then they built the house, and each was ordered to furnish it with the requisite articles at which they were skilled. They did so, and gave different names to the things which they gave, and thus arose a diversity of languages. Then Jehovah told them to prepare the feast customary upon the completion of a house, and they made one of yams, taro and plantains, which sprang from the place at which they were. Then said Jehovah to them, 'It is good that each of you should go your way into the world and fill the different lands.' So they went forth, each taking yams, taro and plantains, and some named themselves after the particular kind of yams they took, and some from the taro, and others after the plantains, each after the things they took with them when they were sent forth by the spirit (thus accounting for their plant totems), and the place from whence they departed was called Paradise. Then each dwelt in the land at which they arrived, and they settled down and multiplied, the Vatusila at Vandranasing-a, and the Noikoro at Nang-atang-ata. The common people arrived first, and the chiefs followed later on."

The foregoing are Nandurutamata's own words. Lest I should lose the idiom and the precise meaning I got one of my native clerks to write down the old man's story, from which I have made the translation. It was done in 1893, after we had been a year at Nandarivatu, the new hill station. Naikasau, who had been the rural police sergeant at Vunindawa had been promoted, and was the Lieutenant of A.N.C. which formed the garrison of the post. His uncle, Nandurutamata, came over to see us, and although he was verging on eighty he was still hale and hearty in mind and body and had covered on foot the distance between his home at Narokoro-

koyawa in Noemalu and Nandarivatu, about fifty miles over the rugged mountains of central Viti Levu. Although he was so old, his memory was splendid, and he was one of the learned repositories of bygone lore and tradition, a veritable native historian, after the manner of our own bards. At the same time there happened to be another ancient at Nandarivatu, the *Mbuli* of Wainunu, a district on the other big island, Vanua Levu. He had got into some sort of political trouble, was deported for a while and put into my care under honourable detention. He, too, was another fount of customary usage, having been in the time of his boyhood a heathen and a cannibal. I called him into the debate, and he at once ranged himself on the side of the other elder. "Oh, yes, from all time they had known of Jehovah, and when he was quite young, when he and his playmates saw clouds taking a human form, as they sometimes do, they used to say, 'Lo! the great God Jehovah is showing himself.'" They were quite obstinate about it, and I concluded it would be of no use to go on with the argument.

When I talked to them about Paradise or *Parataisi* as they put it, and asked them to explain how they came to use that word, they were dubious and thought perhaps that Qaloqalo should have been mentioned. That is the name of the mythical island in the far north-west from which they think their original forbears came, and to which their souls wing their way after death, which has already been alluded to in Chapter VII. These two elders were not followers of the *Tuka* prophet; if they had been they would rather have spoken of *Mburoto Kula*, Paradise the Scarlet, which was his term. His disciples used to hum a distich of his:

"Enda na kunea maivei na mbula?

Sa na kunei mai Mburoto Kula."

("Where shall we find the Life?

It is to be found in the Red Paradise.")

In olden times everything splendid was red or scarlet, and the Fijian word denoting it is derived from the beautiful parrakeet called the *Kula*. The scarlet feathers of its breast were used to fringe the finest mats and to embroider the fillets which in many of the South Sea Islands were used as royal headdresses. Before the introduction of firearms the killing of these birds was a difficult process, and their small breast feathers were as valuable in the commerce of the Southern Pacific as gold is with us, and perhaps more so. From *kula* to *koula*, which is the Fijian for gold, is but a short step, and natives nowadays will probably tell you about

Mburoto the Golden, instead of the Red Paradise. How quickly they adapt themselves is shown by another little couplet which I used to hear the girls sing :

“Sa ndua na Kavetani nai vana rua,  
Na sulu silika, nai lavo koula.”  
 (“There is a schooner with a Captain bold,  
The sails are silk, the money’s gold.”)

Amongst the early settlers in Fiji was a good sprinkling of men from New Zealand who had fought in the Maori wars. They used to talk about the mad prophet there, Te Kooti, who also invented a new religion called *Hauhau*, founded upon the Bible and the old native legends. *Hau* in Maori is the equivalent of our Fijian *Sau*, which either means a chief or chiefly, royal or noble. As has already been explained “h” and “s” are interchangeable letters in South Sea dialects, and reduplication of a syllable either denotes intensification or a diminution. In regard to *Hauhau* I take it to relate to the former state and to mean right royal or chiefly. *Vale* is the word for house, and cabins built on the decks of canoes are *valevale* or little houses, which is an example of its use as a diminutive. There seems to be no actual rule, and one can judge the proper use of the reduplication only by the context and experience.

Navosavakandua, our prophet, had heard probably of the *Hauhau* doctrine. Many of the old South Sea whalers frequented Fiji, even up to the first few years of my sojourn there. The Bay of Islands in the North Island of New Zealand was a great rendezvous for them, and many Maoris shipped aboard, some of whom deserted and settled in Fiji, and probably they talked about Te Kooti and his religion. Fijians pick up all sorts of ideas, especially from our seafarers. When any of my inland people wanted to get a few pounds quickly they made their way down to Suva and tried to be taken on as dockers and work on the big ocean steamers. That often entailed a short trip to some of the minor Fijian ports, and they used to come home with smatterings of all sorts of strange knowledge. They got to hear of Freemasonry, and so apparently did Navosavakandua, as he and his followers made use of occult signs and passwords. The latter I found out was “Oliliva Oliva Raitha Na Volosima,” but no one would tell me the meaning, and it is open to doubt if it had any. There were so many things that the *Tuka* folk could not explain, and when pressed to do so sheltered themselves under the common reply that it was all part of the business, as they had done in the case of the flaming chariots.



Our prophet was familiarly called Navosa by his intimate friends and retainers. They probably found the full Navosavakandua too much for everyday use, and had recourse to a pet abbreviation. I had a whole sheaf of papers emanating from one of his principal disciples, Sailose Ratu. They are full of cabbalistic signs and cryptic expressions intermingled with his crabbed handwriting. The latter I got transcribed by my head native clerk and found it to be a record of prophecies, prayers and visions, in which the author describes himself as the *Voula*, which I think is an archaic word for a seer. They were all written after the deportation of Navosa to Rotumah, and some even after his death there, yet they abound in description of his appearances to his faithful followers. Sailose Ratu also compiled what he called the *Tuka Gazette*, which fell into my hands with the papers to which I have just alluded. It is written in an ordinary copy-book, which it pretty well fills. I have sent it to the Fijian Society to see if that body can make anything out of it. I have no native assistance here in England, and an interpretation without it would be almost impossible.

Sailose kept out of my way during the main *Tuka* troubles and until after the Government had established the new post at Nandarivatu. Then he began to be a nuisance, moving about and disturbing the people's minds with his mad fanaticism. One Tuesday morning he marched into my office and said, "The *Ranandi* (Queen Victoria) died yesterday and she is to be buried on Thursday. It has been so revealed to me by the spirit, and I have thought it my duty to come and give you the information." This was about two years before Her Majesty's death and three years before the Pacific cable reached Fiji. The end of Sailose was, as concerned myself, that the police prosecuted him as a lunatic at large, and he was committed to the public asylum. As I have remarked in a previous chapter it was one thing to send a man there and another to get him admitted, as the doctors always kicked against giving the necessary certificates. When Sailose was got down to Suva the usual thing happened, and the medical officer of the asylum would not take him in. However, as I have already recounted in a similar case not long before, a patient who had been released immediately afterwards ran amok and cut off the head of the first unfortunate he came across. That suggested a little caution for the future, and Sailose was placed at the Colonial Hospital to be kept under observation. Fortunately, Miss Mary Anderson, the matron, was an accomplished Fijian scholar, and she had some conversations with him. In the course of one of them he disclosed that he was the

shrine of a spirit, whose absolute servant he was, and he further added that if it told him to kill her, Dr. Corney, the chief medical officer, or the commissioner of his district (myself) he would unhesitatingly do so. Then his certificate was signed and he remained an inmate of the asylum for twelve years or so, until after I left the Colony in 1910. Then for some reason or other he was let out, and returning home said it was done by my orders as, recognising that Queen Victoria had died after all, it was unjust to keep him confined. He started on his old tricks again, and towards the end of the Great War stirred up some unrest and excitement by convening a great meeting at Tavua and telling the people that his spirit, by its inspiration, had informed him that Great Britain had surrendered to Germany by a *soro*, the Fijian term for an act of submission, that the Governor had been deposed, that everybody could now do as he pleased and pay no more taxes. Many believed him as they had his master, Navosavakandua, but their minds were speedily disabused by the return of Sailose to the asylum. It was his last flare-up, and not long afterwards he, too, sought the path to *Mburotu* the Scarlet.

Here is one of Sailose's *Tuka* prayers :

“ 8. 5. 95.

Emeni ni bula, au sa bula mai Valekulaya ka raica na rarama ni bula vakatovolei oqo, ka marau na yaloqu ki Burotukula au sa vakarau e na siga edadai, au kereya e na yalomu na loloma na sala meu kune ka vinaka kina. Emeni Voula ni bula.”

#### TRANSLATION

“ Amen of life, I have life in the Scarlet House and see the light of this probationary life, and my spirit rejoices in Burotu the Red, I prepare to go thither to-day, I beseech with your spirit mercy for the road that I may find good things therein. Amen Prophet of Life.”

It will be seen that Sailose was sufficiently educated to be able to denote the date by figures. He probably learnt to read and write in the Wesleyan village schools, but his signs and crosses he picked up, I think, from the breviaries of his Catholic friends.

It has already been told how my old retainer, Jesoni, the police-sergeant for the Ra Province, declared his belief in the *Tuka* religion when dying, although he had been a fervent member of the Wesleyan body. I found out, too, that the head constable of Tholo North,

a most revered official, was one of the destroying angels of the new religion, and Joseva Bembe Tumbi, whom I have mentioned as having imitated Sir John Bates Thurston's method of initialling papers with J.B.T., also fell after my departure, owing to his adherence to the *Tuka*, although he had been appointed *Mbuli* of Yalatina. It is the cult of those parts of Tholo North and Ra within the shadow of Nakauvandra, the holy mount and shrine of the Great Ndeng-ei.

This personage I have endeavoured to portray in the earlier chapters as a Polynesian Viking or demi-god who landed on the northern shores of Viti Levu about the end of the sixteenth or commencement of the seventeenth century, and settled at a place called the Kauvandra, which was so named from the temporary house that he built there. Dying, he passed to the realms of the gods, and in accordance with ancestral religion was worshipped under the guise of his totem, the snake. His shrine, which was said to be a large and gloomy cavern at the summit of the lofty mountain on whose slopes he had dwelt, was the subject of the wildest and most fabulous tales. With time he developed into an enormous serpent, and if he turned and tossed in his sleep the earth quaked. At the mouth of the cavern was a big *mbaka* or banyan tree (*Ficus indica*) called *ulunda*, which means the head or top of all. In the branches of this giant fig dwelt a beautiful dove called *Turukawa*, the pet of Ndeng-ei, and by its soft cooing each morn at dawn the god was wakened from slumber. In the holy land about the sacred mount there also dwelt Rokola, the patron genius of the carpenter clan, who had two sons, Nakalasambaria and Nathirikaumoli. They were mighty hunters and skilful archers, the bow being the national weapon of Fiji in the olden times. Soon they had shot all the game in the country-side and only *Turukawa* remained, and at last he too fell to the arrow of one of the brothers. Consequently there was no one to wake the sleeping snake, and he troubled the world by his mighty heavings as he writhed about in his restlessness when the time came that he should have risen. Waking at last he wrathfully demanded who had slain his beautiful bird, and the culprits with the usual Fijian insouciance pleaded guilty to the deed, and the angry god demanded their execution. However, the other divinities were not prepared to proceed to such an extreme, and a Holy War ensued in which some supported Ndeng-ei and others Rokola, the father of the two young chiefs. Neither side achieved a decisive victory, the country-side was wasted by the conflict until at last an armistice was arranged and terms of peace arrived at. The offenders, Nakalasambaria and Nothirikaumoli, were banished for ever from

Viti; their father built a canoe for them and a tremendous flood was caused in the head waters of the Wainimbuka by the shooting of an arrow into the *vung-a yalo* or sacred myrtle which grew on the Kauvandra. The mighty stream which flowed from it surged southwards and formed the great Rewa River and on it floated the ark, as it was so mentioned to me, away to the distant ocean which washed the southern shores of Viti Levu.

The legend is set forth in *The Meke of Turukawa*, a song and dance which commemorates the event. I have seen this opera performed, and I have a copy of the libretto. Sir Basil Thomson in one of his books, *The Fijians*, gives an admirable translation of it in what he calls "The Epic of Dengei." Another fragment of the poem is to be found in that very interesting work *The King and People of Fiji*, by the Reverend Joseph Waterhouse, published in 1866, one of the first descriptions of mission enterprise in the Group. The translation and versification of the *meke* there is by the Reverend John Hunt, one of the earliest workers in the new field.

Sir Basil Thomson's rendering of the ballad of Turukawa is most poetic and lucid, and as he has already given it so fully I do not want to go over the ground again. My version differs in some points, but it came probably from a different source, and no two accounts ever agree. The Gospels vary in minor parts yet agree on the main points, and so it is in the history of the *Tuka*; the Fijian theory of life eternal. In Sir Basil's book there appears to be a slight error which may be a printer's. He speaks of the cleaving of the *vungayali tree* which caused the great flood on which the twin gods sailed away to the great ocean. *Vung-a* is the generic name of the myrtle, of which many varieties are to be found on the mountain slopes, and *yali* means "lost," so his rendering of the word would mean the "lost myrtle." *Vung-a-yalo* is the correct designation and means the sacred or spiritual myrtle. There is one right at the summit of Mount Victoria, and its flowers differ considerably from the ordinary species with scarlet and yellow bottle-brush blooms which clothe the lower slopes. The blossom of the sacred myrtle is an open white cup with a dark centre, something like that of the wild white hibiscus of Fiji, the *Storckii*.

It is only to be found at the highest elevations, and is a pure and delicate flower, and calls to my mind the Californian lily of the Holy Spirit. From its root on the Holy Mount gushed forth the waters which caused the great Rewa River, and afforded again to the Fijians a simile to the rock smitten by Moses in the wilderness.

In *The Fijians* the name of the canoe is given as *Naivaka-nawanawa*





A SATISFACTORY CATCH.

Freeing the fishers of the Ratn's turtle fleet from the dreadful alternative.





(the lifeboat). In the next chapter I am going to try and tell of my visit to the spot where the first canoe was built on the very head waters of the Wainimbuka, below the western slopes of the Kauravandra. There I saw its petrified chips, and was told that being the first ever fashioned it was called the *Tamunamuna* (cut from the rump). *Ta* is the verb to cut or hew, and *muna* is the intensive form of that part of the human anatomy which a man generally likes to warm before the fire. Freely translated it means botched or cut lumpily or awkwardly. It evidently inferred that being the first craft to be constructed it was done without that skill to which native carpentry subsequently attained.

As the Fijians have mixed up the Bible with their old legends, so I think they have confused their own old traditions, and it may be that two canoes were built at different times marking distinct epochs. I have been up and down the Wainimbuka frequently, and its whole course is reminiscent of the mythology of the first canoe ever built by which members of the carpenter clan were distributed throughout the length and breadth of Fiji. I can distinctly recall to my mind the picture of two large rocks in the river bed as it flows through the district of Nailenga. As the *Tamunamuna* was passing there the wives of the carpenter were plaiting mats, and kept the corners from being blown about by the wind by means of heavy stones. An extra gust shook the weights into the water and there they have remained ever since. They are as big as the one which Lewatini, the bride of Tombayaweni, fished out of the pool on the Singatoka when her lover was testing her fidelity mentioned in Chapter IX, which I likened to the size of a motor-bus. The old native magistrate who used to travel with me when we were on circuit in the Wainimbuka districts was a splendid cicerone, and pointed out every spot we passed and spun yarns about them. He told me much about the voyage of the first canoe, which accounts for the origin of the skilled artisans of Fiji who became renowned as the best builders of the large sailing outrigger craft of the Western Pacific. One has only to read Captain Cook and the books of other voyagers to discover how superior the Fijians were in the constructive arts, in the fashioning of bowls, clubs, spears and all descriptions of wooden ware, and the natives themselves will tell you that all this knowledge was derived from Rokola, the god of the carpenters who built the *Tamunamuna*, and on it sent his craftsmen away to all parts of the Group to settle and found a hereditary caste. Their largest colony was founded at Rewa, where they dwell to this day in a quarter of the town called

Ndorokavu. They form a distinct clan—once a carpenter always a carpenter.

The first Tongan and Polynesian adventurers, Ndeng-ei and his followers, must have blundered down to Fiji in the ill-cut and clumsy *tongiaki*, the canoes then in fashion in their own islands. In their new home they learnt the superiority of the vessels of Fiji, whither the Tongans afterwards resorted to build canoes, adopting the local model. The *Tamunamuna* had probably been cut long before any of the straight-haired heroes arrived to be adopted by the Melanesian clans of Viti and to found the chief families.

As the Bible and the old native myths, from their similarity to each other, the creation of man, the construction of a building to reach heaven, the flood, the ark and the great canoe, and the smitten rock, and myrtle from which water gushed, have become so interwoven in the Fijian mind, so too perhaps the old Melanesian traditions have been confused with those of the strangers who came to Viti as far back as the close of the fifteenth century, and make it difficult to determine whether the episode of Turukawa and the building of the *Vaka-nawanawa* occurred before or after their advent.

I never saw the wonderful performance of the fire-walkers of the Island of Mbenga, who in their ceremony of the *Vilavilairevo* walk unharmed across the red-hot stones of a huge native oven specially heated for the display, but in my early days I met men of the Sawau clan whose hereditary privilege it is to pass unscathed through fire, and they told me they quite understood how Meshech, Shadrach and Abednego survived the ordeal, and this too is another coincidence between Fijian traditions and the Bible.

I have seen myself how a myth can start and grow. Roko Lemba of Numbumakita was one of the *Voula* or seers of the *Tuka*. He died some distance away from his native village to which he was carried for burial, along the main highway across Viti Levu. A corpse is prepared for the grave by folding it in shrouds of bark cloth with outside wrappers of grass mats, the ends of which protrude and are tied up, making a bundle considerably longer than the body, which for carriage is slung on a pole. Roko Lemba died some twenty miles or so away from his home, and the tired bearers who brought him back put the corpse down every now and then and marked the place by putting stones at his head and heels. In any case he was a tall man, but the protrusions of his funeral wrappings made him greater still. Afterwards his friends and relations piously planted cuttings of the scarlet dracæna at the outer end of the stones which

denoted his various resting-places, and thus added a few more inches to his stature. They will be pointed out by subsequent generations to the passers-by who will think that there were giants in former days. As the Fijian proverb has it, in regard to their habit of exaggeration :

“Only whisper a thing in Viwa,  
And it resounds like a roaring fire.”

Whilst the Government was wrestling with the *Tuka* in 1885, the Wesleyan Mission celebrated its Jubilee, the fiftieth anniversary of the landing of the pioneers, Cargill and Cross, at Lakemba in 1835. In honour of the event a large deputation of the leading Wesleyan lights in Australia came to Fiji, and I saw a contingent of them pass Vunindawa en route to Ratu Jona's school and station at Nairukuruku. In the midst of their rejoicings and songs of triumph Navosavakandua was playing the rôle of John the Baptist in the new religion. He did not claim to be that prophet who should change all things, but was only preparing the way for the return of the divine sons of the carpenter-god who would turn the world upside-down and restore the ancient ancestral worship, and grant to the faithful the *Tuka* or state of everlasting youth and life, in that great and last day when they should judge mankind. If in fifty years this new religion could be evolved from the ancient Fijian myths and the doctrines of Christianity, it seems not impossible that Melanesian and Polynesian legends could have become equally intermingled and confounded in the two and a half centuries intervening between the advent of Ndeng-ei and the first Wesleyan missionaries.

Polynesian scholars say that the race first commenced to make its way to the Pacific from the Asiatic shores somewhere about the commencement of the Christian era, effecting a lodgment in Fiji en route from which it was driven out by the hardy Melanesians. Frederick O'Brien in his book published in 1921, *The Mystic Isles of the South Seas*, quotes a legend of the Marquesans which mentions their Fijian sojourn and the cruel treatment meted out to them by the savage inhabitants with their merciless use of the bow. Tahitians know of Fiji too, which they call Hiti, but the Fijians themselves know nothing of the arrival of any foreigners until the advent of Ndeng-ei and the other heroes who came much about the same time.

In 1870, the year of my arrival in Fiji, bows and arrows were obsolete weapons as regards warfare, but were employed in killing

fish. They were so completely superseded by firearms that their memory was entirely forgotten, and it was only when I began to dig out old history that I began to learn of their former use. Commodore Wilkes, of the United States Exploring Expedition which visited the Fijian Group in 1840, mentions the use of bows and arrows when he sent a punitive force against the people of Malolo, a small island on the western coast of Viti Levu, who had murdered some of his officers. In the New Hebrides and the Solomons and other Melanesian Islands to the westward bows and arrows until quite recently were much in evidence, and were greatly dreaded, as the arrows were steeped in putrid corpses and the slightest scratch from them caused blood-poisoning and dreadful death from tetanus. It was thus that Commodore Goodenough of H.M.S. *Pearl* perished at Santa Cruz in 1875. The Fijian did not resort to such devilry, and only used plain arrows.

After I had been Resident Commissioner of Tholo North for some time the people of Nandrau presented me with the bow and arrows of a bygone warrior of their tribe named Telatha, a very celebrated archer, whose weapon was known as the *Kalawa ni Mang-a*. That is an obscene and unprintable term, but may be bowdlerized as "The Causer of Widows," as Telatha was a dead shot and when he drew on any one, that man's wife knew him no more. The bow and arrows were beautiful specimens and should be in the Fiji Museum now, as part of the Allardyce collection.



## CHAPTER XXV

### The Ascent of Mount Victoria and the Pilgrimage to the God-land

THE rainy season of 1886, January, February and March, was very hot and trying, during which there was a slight hurricane and heavy floods in the rivers. At that period of the year one endeavours to keep quiet as much as possible, but the exigencies of the *Tuka* and the administrative work kept me on the move all the time. In January I had to make my way across the Island to Viti Levu Bay on the northern coast to assist my colleague of the Ra Province to try over a hundred of Navosavakandua's followers. In February I went to Narokorokoyawa, to hold the Provincial Council of Lomai Tholo, which I got through all right, but at its conclusion was bowled over by a sharp attack of dengue fever. I tried to struggle home across the rugged hills which intervened, but broke down altogether, and had to lie up in a little hamlet on the side of the path. There were no roads at all in those days, only very steep and slippery tracks which had to be traversed in single file, and in the hot, steamy wet season were particularly trying and exhausting. After a few days' rest at Sawanikula, where I had pulled up, I managed to get to Undu, the head of canoe navigation, and from thence I was taken down river to Vunindawa. Instead of getting any rest I had immediately to write up the Council minutes and my report for the information of the Resident Commissioner. That was hardly done when the hurricane started on the third of March, and for twenty-four hours it blew great guns and the rivers rose and overflowed their banks. As soon as the weather broke I had to start again for Viti Levu Bay, this time for the trial of the great Navosavakandua himself, the occasion on which he thought I was going to hang him, which has already been told in the last chapter but one.

April marks the finish of the hurricane months and rainy season, and near the end of it I made a start for Mount Victoria and the

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Kauvandra, the god-land of Fiji. Towards the close of 1885 Sir John Thurston, who was then Acting Governor, accompanied by the Chief Justice, now Sir Fielding Clarke, Sidney Marriott, the Resident Commissioner of Tholo West, and some others had ascended Tomanivei or Mount Victoria, as it was subsequently called, from the westward. The naval officer employed on the coast survey had reported that the highest land on Viti Levu was apparently just at the back of Tavua on the northern shore of the island, so Sir John determined to make an expedition there, and located the spot at Tomanivei. He wrote to me about it and desired that I should as soon as conveniently possible explore the eastern slopes and make the ascent from that direction.

At that time there was a small syndicate which employed a man to prospect for gold in the interior of Viti Levu, which, by the way, has never so far been found in payable quantity. The prospector's name was James Harding, whom I have mentioned in Chapter V as having commanded the expedition which effected the pacification of Tholo East in 1874. Some of the Wesleyan *vakavuvuli* village teachers having brought word that they had seen coal on the slopes of Tomanivei, Harding was desirous of investigating whether it was so, and as I was bound for there he accompanied me.

When we started the rivers were still running strong, and it was hard work poling the *Vuramothe* up stream, but I remember how glad I was to get out into the open again after the steam and mugginess of the wet hot season and how, as we got further into the hills, the atmosphere grew fresher and cooler. We left Vunindawa on a Saturday and only got as far as Nairukuruku, the Wesleyan station, where my friend Ratu Jona, the native minister, lived. We spent Sunday with him, and when we went on the next day he joined our cortège, which now began to swell when it was learnt that I was about to essay the ascent of Mount Victoria and the Kauvandra. It took us two more days to fight our way against the strong current to Undu, from whence we walked up the valley of the Wailoa to Nasongo, which we reached on Wednesday, the 28th April.

The next morning we left there at nine o'clock and followed the gorge of the Nasongo River until its huge obstructing boulders and frequent waterfalls forced us to climb up into the forest land above. We had to ascend a very steep and almost precipitous slope called the Vunisukau until we reached a plateau some two thousand feet above sea-level. There, in a lovely glade strewn with great boulders under which we sat and leant against, we halted for a while and rested. I remember how I rejoiced in the clear, cool, invigorating air and

enjoyed the beauty of the scene. All round the great stones grew giant club moss, and many of the trees were gay with scarlet orchid blooms, the flowers of the *Dendrobium noblianum*. What with the hot season, the dengue fever and the anxiety and fatigue caused by my vigilant watch on the *Tuka* I was feeling very run down, but the crispness and freshness of the uplands put fresh life in me. Whenever I recall that lovely mountain country the hundred and twenty-first Psalm comes into mind: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help." Afterwards, when I came to be stationed at Nandarivatu within half a day's walk of where we were resting, I always thought of that verse whenever I had to go on circuit in the sweltering heat of the northern coast plains. But a short thirteen miles separated them from the cool heights at their back, yet below one could not bear even a sheet at night as a coverlet, whilst on the heights above we were glad to sit round a roaring fire of logs.

From where we halted at Vunisukau the path followed the plateau for some distance, and then it made a deep descent to Matanavono, the infant source of the River Nasongo. Then there was a steep pull up until we reached the plateau again. By 4 p.m. we had come to within an easy distance of the summit of Tomanivei, and had attained an elevation of about four thousand feet. Then the clouds of vapour which on the northern side of Viti Levu clothe the mountain tops at eve were beginning to gather. They get piled up by the south-east trade wind, and gazing upwards from the coast plains the hills look as if they are snow clad and present a beautiful appearance. The natives call these clouds the *nde ui theva*, the scud of the south-east trades. During the night it draws off the hills and whistles through the valleys and gorges in the form of the land breeze, and returns the mountain mists to the sea.

We therefore determined to camp for the night. In Fiji in those days we could only travel in a rough and ready way, as there were no paths fit for animal transport, and consequently we were not burdened by the impedimenta of tents, etc. But that mattered not as the forest furnished ample material for hut construction at which the hardy hillmen were adepts. All around were clumps of the *vundi ni veli* or banana of the fairies, the *Alpinia boia*. Our guides and carriers with their long sixteen-inch butcher's knives soon cut down saplings which, tied together by wild vines, formed frameworks which they thatched with the broad fronds of the bananas, and laid their thick fleshy stems for floors, which kept the occupants well above the damp and cold of the ground. Then bracken

and ferns were added, above which were spread the mats generally carried in our packs, and thus were provided beds on which I have had many a sweet sleep. The natives call these simple structures *yavusa*, and they are quite water-tight whilst the leaves are fresh, but they have to be renewed when they commence to fade. They are quite comfortable and dry in even the heaviest rains.

In the forest lands these improvised camps are easy and speedily run up, but away to the westward of Mount Victoria in the grassy country of Vosa or West Tholo their construction is difficult owing to the want of material. Sir John Thurston told me of one of his early experiences when as British Consul before we annexed Fiji he accompanied one of King Thakombau's columns sent inland in 1867 to try and avenge Mr. Baker's death. It had already been mentioned how several were sent up, and how all came to grief except this one, which acted under Sir John's advice. It was, of course, under the orders of a chief of Mbau, a member of the royal clan, our British Consul being the only European with it. One night darkness fell upon it on a high and grassy plateau where there was nothing with which to construct shelters, except such grass as the place furnished. The night mists fell chill and dank, the thermometer dropped, there was only the scantiest of fires to shiver round, and there was a general feeling of depression. After a while the chief in command of the royal force came to Sir John and said he had managed to get a *yavusa* run up, and would he please take shelter there, and conducted him to it. As far as could be seen a few spears had been stuck into the ground over which some mats had been slung, forming something similar to what the French call *tent d'abri*, and inside was what looked like a heap of mats. Worn out and tired Sir John flung himself down and was just about to fall into the sweetest of sleeps when he was startled by the bed coughing! To his horror, instead of the fleshy stems of the wild banana being spread to keep off the cold earth several human beings, the domestic serfs of some of the chiefs accompanying the expedition, had been utilised for the purpose. What were such cheap articles in comparison with the health and comfort of their illustrious charge? Fijians are always greatly concerned for the safety of those whom they have in charge, and think that they themselves are hostages for it and personally responsible. I tried to show this when I recounted how, when the French bishop was capsized in the rapids by his Catholic canoemen, the head native Wesleyan minister waited upon his *confrère* on the other side, and warned him that he would be hanged by the British Government if by his carelessness any

under his charge lost their lives, even though they might be foreigners ! The incident of the coughing bed reminds me of that passage in *Westward Ho !* where the wine of the Bishop of Carthagená on board the great galleon, the *City of the True Cross*, was cooled by ice brought from the Horqueta, the gift of some Spanish lady, who had "spent" an Indian or two in bringing down the precious offering. In like manner the high-born chiefs who were looking after Sir John thought it quite legitimate to use a few *kaisi* (slaves) to ensure his health and comfort.

My last memories of that night in the camp below Tomanivei, ere I fell asleep, are as of many phantasmagoria. The white night mists hung around like masses of cotton wool on which were silhouetted our men sitting round their bivouacs singing, smoking and drinking *yangona*. Weirdly and fantastically their forms showed up against the damp fog which was illumined by prismatic rays of many hues caused by the reflection of our fires. Every other man or so had brought a few yams and taro, and the forest also yielded savouries wherewith to make merry. That was before the coming of the thrice-accursed mongoose which has killed all the ground game, frogs, snails and all the little relishes and delicacies which added to the joy of native life. The beastly little animal was imported by a sugar planter who thought thereby to keep down the rats in the cane-fields. But as the Fijians will tell you they are *yalo vata* or of one accord with them, and some of the natives have told me that in the stone walls which surround their villages the mongooses and the rats live in amity together. But gone are the parrots, the landrails and ground doves, all killed by the devastating little foreigner, which spares nothing within his reach. The same thing has happened in the West Indies, where, too, the mongoose was imported for the purpose of destroying rats.

Give him but a bare chance and a Fijian will be happy and jolly, and the hardy hillmen are expert foresters and enjoy life in the open, and that night, the 29th April, 1886, we were all cheerful and merry, as we had no rain. That is the one drawback to the highlands on the weather side of the island on which we were still.

We broke camp the next morning at eight, and it took till noon to reach the summit of Tomanivei or Mount Victoria. Before arriving there we came to the minor summit, which the natives call Tomanivei Lailai or Little Tomanivei. My head guide was the *Mbuli* of Mboumbutho, and when we got there he jumped forward to where were two small mossy mounds which looked as if they had been placed there purposely for seats ; in fact, Sir John Thurston



told me afterwards that he had sat upon one of them. He was conducted thither by people from the west who had not the same intimate knowledge of the spot as my man had. Putting his long walking staff under the first of them and saying, "Hallo, here are our old war drums," the *Mbuli* prised it up, and out came a medium-sized *vesi lali* or drum in an admirable state of preservation, and then he proceeded to dig out the other, which was similar in size and appearance. In the fighting just prior to the hoisting of the Union Jack in 1874 the hard-pressed Mboumbutho clan which was on our side had sought refuge on the very summit of Tomanivei, and their fortifications were to be found all around. The *Mbuli* gave the drums to me, and I sent them down to Suva, giving one to Sir John Thurston, the Acting Governor, and the other to Dr., afterwards Sir William, Macgregor, the Acting Colonial Secretary. The Mboumbutho afterwards laid claim to all the land about there, and Sir John was inclined to back them up, saying that their title-deeds were slung above the door of his office, as he had their war drum suspended there. Subsequently, though, when I investigated the titles I found that the summit of Tomanivei and all the western slopes belonged to a tribe called the Wana, the chief of whom, Uli, always solemnly maintained that when the gods created the world they gave the valley of Wana and all the adjacent country to his ancestors, and that they had been in occupation ever since.

Sir John Thurston did not get beyond the minor summit, and when I reached the main height at Big Tomanivei I vainly thought I was the first to reach it, but afterwards I found that Sidney Marriott and some of the younger members of the Acting Governor's party had already been there. But I had not that knowledge then, and when I had climbed the hoary old *vunga* tree which crowned the top I felt very proud. These myrtles grow to a large size, that is to say, the ordinary common sort, and I could sit comfortably on the branches, and there I was on the *Ului Viti* or top of Fiji. North-east, north and north-west I got glimpses of the sea, whilst southward rolled the wooded slopes and high mountain ranges which obscured its view in that direction. About one o'clock the mist began to gather and prevented further observation, so we descended to Qaliwana or the Vale of Wana below the western shoulder of the mountain, and camped in the huts put up for Sir John Thurston. It was a lovely spot, over two thousand feet above the sea, cool and pleasant, through which flowed one of the infant heads of the Singatoka River. We were now on the western watershed and on the lee side of the island. There was a marked difference in the vegetation, which was

no longer so dense. Belts of trees occurred with patches of grass land intervening, and the trees had only short mosses clinging to them instead of the long weeping masses to be found on the eastern and weather side, and the ground beneath was dry and crisp instead of wet and spongy.

The news of our exploit having reached the village on that side, Namatakula, the inhabitants came out to greet us, bringing with them a feast of a whole baked pig on top of the usual basket filled with yams and taro. A root of *yangona* was, of course, also presented with the usual honours, and we quaffed it that night round the camp fires. Among the dwellers of Namatakula were some members of the notorious Thawanisa tribe, who in the wars of King Thakombau's days had been the most ferocious cannibals and determined enemies of His Majesty, and they were the bogeys by which the children of the surrounding clans were frightened. Now they sat round the fire and we all hobnobbed together. I saw one man who kept eyeing Harding curiously and chuckling to himself. At last he could contain himself no longer, and turning to Harding said, "Sir, do you remember the day we shot you? We ambushed you and bowled you over, and the others, with long shots. We ought to have closed and finished you up, but we were afraid of the little guns in your belts (revolvers). After you had been carried off we searched the ground and I found a cartridge pouch." Harding told me that he had lost his on that occasion. Then the two began to swap yarns until late at night and were as happy and jolly together as possible, until I broke up the party by saying that we should have to be called early the next morning, as it was the first of May and we had a long and difficult march ahead.

So we rose at dawn and started to follow the Singatoka to its source. En route we were pointed out what was supposed to be the coal mine, but it was only a trunk of a big *ndakua* or Fijian kauri pine, buried in the soil and reduced to charcoal by fire. *Qilaiso* is the name applied to charcoal and adapted by the people to describe coal, which they saw for the first time as fuel on board the steamers, hence the confusion. We had an extremely stiff climb to the ridge which divides the water systems of the Singatoka and the Tawa, the main head of the Wainimbuka, the mother of the Rewa, the long river which flows away to the southern coast. The divide is called Irusu-olewa-veioroi and is 3250 feet above the sea. Thence we descended to the Tawa, until we arrived at its junction with the Wainimbuka at Ndruidrui, which has an elevation of only 900 feet. The Wainimbuka is a much smaller stream than the

Tawa, but gives its name to the main river through rising in the Kauvandra, the Sacred Mount. Turning up it we followed its course until we arrived at the village of Natunu. It was now Saturday evening and we determined to halt and spend Sunday there.

Just behind Natunu is a small ridge beyond which is the northern sea coast, only a short distance off, half-way between the important sugar-producing districts of Mba and Ra. Should a railway ever be constructed between them and Suva the line could follow the valleys of the Rewa and Wainimbuka at easy gradients without any serious engineering difficulties. It could be electrified also by the water power from the numerous brooks en route, and a short tunnel through the Natunu Gap would bring it down to the level coast plains.

Ratu Jona, who had fallen into the place of chaplain to our little expedition, preached in the village church at Natunu. He took his text from the destruction of the prophets of Baal by Elijah, and delivered a most eloquent sermon directed against the priests and seers of the *Tuka*, the followers of the false Navosavakandua. I suppose that except the members of my following, and even they were not all free from the taint, most of the congregation were secretly inclined to the new religion, but with the usual Fijian desire to please the discourse was politely and amiably listened to.

The next day we resumed our journey to the Kauvandra, and the cavern of Ndeng-ei, as our objective, to which some of the villagers of Natunu guided us. The country through which we passed looked gloomy to me, and the hills stern and forbidding. I do not know whether this arose from imagination, thinking of the snake-god and the legends of his cult, or whether it was from leaving the forest country with its exuberant foliage and exchanging it for the dry grassy valleys, interspersed with patches of arid barren land. The impression still remains with me and my photos of those parts confirm it.

We were now passing through a most historic region, which, however, was something of a nightmare owing to the way the ancient names had become confounded with the Biblical terms of the new religion. The first place that I can recollect being pointed out was a mass of black rock properly called Vung-ala, which had been changed into Roma (Rome). In the old legendary days it had been the council rock of the gods. A little further on we passed what the guides said was Papiloni (Babylon), and then we came to Ijipita (Egypt). The next object of interest was the hollow boulder in which Andi Vilaiwasa, the daughter of the great Ndeng-ei, was tattooed, and our guides said, "Hither still come our daughters to follow her

example." This was quite evident from the blackened roof of the shelter which showed the recent and frequent use of fires within. Then we came to a small rivulet flowing through a bed composed of flakes of rock and large shingle which we were told was formed by the chips of *vesi* (*Afzelia bijuga*) caused when the ark was cut and fashioned by Rokola, the carpenter-god, it having been built at this spot. Overshadowing it was a tree said to be that of good and evil or the tree of knowledge. Those are the main points that I can remember, but they will help to show the inextricable jumble of the old legends with the sacred history of the Bible.

We at last reached the shrine of Ndeng-ei, which turned out not to be a cavern at all, but the extreme summit of the Kauvandra. This mountain is not named on the last Ordnance survey, but is marked by a trig station which gives the elevation at 2683 feet. It is just like a Dartmoor tor with a peak crowned with three huge boulders, two lying together with one on top. There is a slight crevice between the boulders, and the Fijian word for any cavity, whether a huge cavern or a superficial crack, is *qara*, hence the mistake I and others had fallen into in imagining that the lair of the snake-god was a vast and gloomy cave. The fissure between the boulders faced the north-west, the orthodox point of a *thimbathimba* or jumping-off place for the spirits of the dead, as they started on their flight to the Islands of the Blessed away beyond the sunset.

In front of the shrine was a heap of votive offerings, and the ground all around was strewn with them : old spears, clubs, whales' teeth and almost every description of native property, but all mouldering, honeycombed and rotten with age. There were also a few fragments of foreign plates, which pointed somewhat to modern times. But even they seemed to have been offered at some period comparatively remote. Everything presented the appearance of decay and neglect ; even the track seemed unfrequented and our guides had to use their knives to clear the way. Evidently the god had fallen into disrepute, and it was quite evident that no pilgrims with pious gifts, for some considerable time, had disturbed the sleep of the huge serpent that was supposed to slumber there, and shocks of earthquakes were consequently few and far between. *En passant* it may be remarked that Fiji does not experience many such, and when they do come they are but mild. I was in the village of Viria one Sunday when a slight shock occurred, and then I heard a subdued noise in all the houses. I was in the native magistrate's quarters and saw nothing happen to account for what had reached my ears, and I asked for an explanation. " Oh ! " said my host, " all the people are pleased at



the earthquake and are patting the mats in their houses as a sign of joy. Had it not been *Sing-a tambu* (Sunday) they would have rushed out on to the green and yelled, and would have beaten the big war drums, such being our custom whenever the earth trembles." I was forty years in Fiji and my only recollection of earthquakes is that they were rare and not more frequent than in England.

How can this apparent neglect of the great Ndeng-ei be accounted for? Was it the new religion as preached by Navosavakandua which denounced him as the old serpent, the enemy of mankind, who was to be destroyed when the twin gods whom he had banished returned to Viti? These are questions hard to be answered, as the Fijian is such a mass of contradictions, one day reverencing a sacred object and reviling it the next.

It had been my intention to have spent a night in the cavern of the god, but as that was non-existent, and the sharp peak at the summit offered no shelter whatever, we determined to descend the eastern slopes of the mountain and seek refuge at its foot at the village of Vatukathevatheva. In doing so we passed Ulunda, where Turukawa, Ndeng-ei's pet dove used to reside. The sun was setting when we reached our destination and there the Expedition disbanded, my guides returning to their mountain homes, whilst Ratu Jona and Harding departed on their separate ways, and I went to stay a few days and rest with my friend, W. C. Reay, the Inspector of Native Taxes at Vaileka, Rakiraki, the Government station for the Ra Province. From thence I took the road to the head of the Wainimbuka at the back of Viti Levu where my canoe was waiting and returned by water to Vunindawa.

After that the *Tuka* died down for a while, and its whole course was duly reported to the Colonial Office by the Governor in a series of dispatches, and it was with much gratification that I received, in conjunction with Mr. Carew, the thanks of Lord Granville, who was then Secretary of State for the Colonies, for the manner in which we had dealt with it.

In July, 1886, the Acting Governor, Mr. John Thurston, C.M.G. (he was knighted in the following year), Mrs. Thurston and their family came up to Vunindawa for change of air and for the coolness of the hill country and remained for a month. The Acting Governor and I made a walking tour to Narokorokoyawa. It had to be perforce on foot as there were no bridle tracks then. We returned via Undu where the *Vuramothe*, my large canoe, was waiting, and went home by the Wainimala. Six years afterwards I took Sir John and Lady Thurston over the same route, but then His



Excellency and his private secretaries were able to ride, and her ladyship to use a rickshaw, as I had got a certain amount of road-making done in the interval, and had imported three rickshaws from Calcutta, such as are used about Simla and at the other Indian hill stations. They were splendid teak-built articles, and when I left Fiji, twenty years afterwards, were still in use.

Mrs. Thurston, as she then was, said that my quarters were very pretty, and that she had not thought that a Fijian house could be made so comfortable, and she has often since laughingly reminded me of the excellent curries that Ananias used to concoct with the wild ducks and pigeons.

The Acting Governor, too, was very pleased with the cleanliness and prettiness of the hill villages, so much so that he asked me to bring down the *Mbulis* to see him at Suva. Therefore, after I had escorted the Government House party down to the Lower Rewa and duly embarked it there I returned to Vunindawa, and then the chiefs and I walked into Suva. But we only got a fleeting glance of His Excellency as H.M.S. *Espiegle* arrived and took him for a cruise to the Western Pacific, of which the Governor of Fiji is the High Commissioner.

In the following December, early in the month, I went down river to Viria to inspect a shed that had been built by the Soloira people for the reception and storage of Native Tax produce.

On the morning of the eighth, my thirty-second birthday, I was embarking on the *Vuramothe* to return home when I saw my good old Sergeant Naikasau arrive on a small *takia*, looking battered and dishevelled, and he and his canoemen had a woebegone look generally, and then I knew that something dreadful must have happened. When I asked what the matter was, Naikasau replied, "Sir, our house was burnt down last night."

It is eighteen miles from Viria to Vunindawa, and a hard pole up stream (poles are generally used against the current as in punting on our English rivers, and paddles when drifting with it), but I got back in time to see the ashes of my home still smoking. I was literally left with only what I had on and the change I had taken with me.

I took up my quarters in the Court House and sent a special messenger with my report to the Resident Commissioner. I also sent on down to my mother at Suva for the clothes I usually kept for the occasions that I went down there on leave. In due course the burning of my house was laid before the Acting Governor. Almost immediately I was directed to take the Lower Rewa duty whilst Mr. Carew came up to Vunindawa to investigate matters. He came

to the conclusion that it was an act of incendiarism, and that a small clique of young chiefs in my immediate neighbourhood were instrumental in effecting it. There was no actual proof against any one single individual, although one was strongly suspected. He added that I had incurred their dislike, although I had done nothing but my duty, and besides the injury inflicted upon myself, it was a deadly insult to the Government, and that it should be met by inflicting a fine upon the particular clan to which the malcontents belonged.

The Acting Governor sent for me and asked what I supposed my loss was. I put it down at a hundred pounds, which was quite under the mark, besides the destruction of all my furniture, clothes, equipment, etc. I had got the station built mostly at my own expense. Sir John Thurston therefore determined that a fine of £150 should be levied, and this was done, of which I was to receive £100 and the Government £50, for supposed damages to quarters, etc. As a matter of fact the public loss was nothing beyond a few bound copies of the Ordinances or Acts of the Colony, a little stationery and, I think, four office chairs. The fine was duly enforced and paid into the Treasury, but eventually I was given only £50 whilst the Government retained the balance. In January, 1887, the new Governor, Sir Charles Mitchell, arrived, and Sir John Thurston went on a special mission to Washington. Sir Charles sent for me and said I had no business, I or any other officer, to have so much personal property in an outlying station, and I was only allowed the small sum mentioned above. It was a most unjust decision, but remonstrance on my part would have done no good. The Governor of a Crown Colony in those days was very much a tin god; there was no cable to England and mails were few and far between. Now the facilities of communication and travel have brought Fiji much closer to the homeland, and the gentleman who presides there is not quite the autocrat he used to be.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### Road Making and the Second *Tuka* Wave

**I**N February, 1887, the Resident Commissioner, attended by the cadet with him for instructional purposes, who afterwards became the well-known Chief Commissioner of Ashanti, Sir Francis Fuller, K.B.E., went to Narokorokoyawa to hold the Provincial Council, whilst I took the Lower Rewa duty. Being the rainy season it poured in torrents, and they returned looking rather battered and sorry for themselves. Fuller sang very well and was known as 'Tosti from the way he rendered that celebrity's "Good-bye"; he was also a good amateur actor, and he graphically mimicked the way in which he and Carew had made their bedraggled entry on foot into Narokorokoyawa with their wet garments clinging to them plastered with red mud acquired by their frequent falls upon the slippery tracks of Tholo. Carew also descanted upon one of them in particular, the ascent of the *Mekemeke ni Kalavo* (Dancing Place of the Rats) which was diabolically steep. I always had a penchant for road making, and in my coffee-planting days had learnt the use of the Ceylon road-tracer, so I determined when I got back into the hills to see what could be done in providing something easier for the Resident Commissioner ere he visited Narokorokoyawa again. From Nandurulolo, where he lived, to Naivuthini on the Wainimala, the journey could be made by water, but from there the rest of the way had to be made on foot, entailing a tramp of twenty-one miles over hill and dale, and the climbing of the Vunimolau, whose crest was about 2500 feet above sea-level. From Naivuthini to Narokorokoyawa was therefore my first objective, and on that section we commenced our new roads.

The first thing that should have been done was to sit down and count the cost, but as we had no money whatever that would have been but added toil. There is no merit in getting things done when there is plenty of cash, but there is when it is non-existent. It has already been shown how Sir Charles Mitchell refused to grant the wherewithal to buy a few picks and spades, and how recourse had

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to be made to digging-sticks according to the usage of old Fiji. But we had one great reserve to fall back upon, the stout arms and hearts of the gentlemen occupants of the Provincial Jail, my Lost Legion, who worked without pay and found their own clothes. The question was how to feed them when they were away from the cultivations of the station. Natives are allowed ten pounds of vegetable food a day, yams and taro, and the weight required for a fair-sized gang would entail a heavy transport system, and absorb much of the labour required for the road making.

Starting at Naivuthini the first part of the projected new track passed through the tribal lands of the Ndaravakawalu. They were the sole owners and very tenacious of their rights, and would not allow neighbouring people even to cut trees for canoe making without the payment of royalties, and those desirous of using or cultivating any of their properties had to pay rent. I laid the matter before the head men of the clan and explained that landowners were supposed to provide facilities for travellers passing through their domains, which the Government had confirmed to their use, and also that it was one of their customary services and observances to weed and maintain the ancient paths. If these were made and graded would they feed the provincial prisoners if they were put on to it? They gladly acquiesced and the work was commenced.

The Ndaravakawalu *Mbuli* at that time was old and feeble, but the next chief in rank, who succeeded him at his death, was an able man, having been a great warrior in the old Devil days and had fought against the Government. His name was Na Tha ni Kalou, the Evil of the Gods, or as Carew used to translate it "The Curse of God," which I thought too drastic, but then the Resident Commissioner had a grudge against him. He became my guide and showed the gaps through which to take the new path and helped me to peg out the gradients. He soon learnt what was wanted, and afterwards went ahead with a gang and cut the trial tracks, and almost invariably selected the right places.

Sergeant Naikasau followed on with the prisoners and did the earth cutting, and so the road rolled on. We all lived in *yavusa* or bush huts such as have been described in the last chapter, and many happy days did we spend at the work. I was generally on ahead with some of the police pegging out the line, and we lived on what the country provided. It was before the introduction of the devastating mongoose, and ducks and pigeons were plentiful, and the brooks provided an ample supply of sweet small fish and prawns. At night, after work, my men used to construct traps with bamboos and

weirs with stones by which they made plentiful catches. Some philanthropic settler had introduced water-cress which spread all over the interior, and the salads from them added a relish to the savoury stews and curries of the faithful Ananias.

As the roads progressed we planted the sides with all sorts of useful trees, cinnamon, cinchona, Liberian coffee, and many other ornamental shrubs and plants. The Fijians through whose lands they passed added crotons, dracænae, coleus, whose gay foliage enhanced the beauty of the scene. The natives are extremely fond of such-like, and whenever they weeded and tended the paths they brought something with them to put in on the edges, and soon began to take a pride in the new ways and to boast of them. The trees grew and flourished and afforded a welcome shade to the passers-by.

We soon found that there were not enough prisoners to do all the road making required and new methods had to be devised. It was agreed that if I would peg out and grade the roads the people through whose property they passed would make them. Old people always rail at new-fangled ideas, and the Fijian elders were no exception to this. When they saw how the paths went round the hills instead of straight up and down they said to me: "Well, as you have laid them out so, we suppose we must make them, but we will never use them. It is effeminate and degenerating to take an easy level way instead of climbing over the hill-tops. That keeps the muscles of the legs braced, but a flat way makes them limp and flabby." However, when they were made they forsook the former tracks altogether. The comfort of the easy gradients to their poor old legs was so great that they speedily gave in, and before long the people of Tholo East began to brag of the superiority of their roads, and soon we had them spreading through all the districts of the province, and they eventually became the highways across the island connecting Suva and the southern coast with Mba and Ra on the northern. The one that we constructed between Nandarivatu and Tavua, which lies on the main road between Mba and Ra, is now used for motors. When we started we little thought of such, merely aspiring to be able to use horses, and soon I got a couple of ponies and was able to ride over a good part of Tholo East. The first expedition on horseback was when a couple of friends came up with their mounts and we rode to Narokorokoyawa. Many of the inland people, especially the women and the old men, had never seen horses before, and as we forded the Wainimala at Mbotenaulu, just three miles below Narokorokoyawa, there was a great concourse



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waiting to see our cavalcade, and we were acclaimed with loud shouts of wonder and with some fear and trembling as many fled from the strange and fearsome animals. I heard one old grey-beard say to his cronies around him : " Boys, it's all up with us now, it would be no use to try and fight the white men as they would bring up these four-footed beasts which would smell us out, catch and rend us to pieces ! "

The first bridge of any size that we constructed was over the Motonoko stream just outside Viria. It was only a little rivulet, but boggy, and the banks were high and sloped outwards forming a wide V-shaped depression, creating a span of about thirty or forty feet. There were no means of driving piles, nor was there any material beyond what could be obtained on the spot. For some time I racked my brains as to what I could do. There happened, however, to be two very fine *ndawa* trees growing there and these were felled and with them the stream was spanned. They were adzed down and gave a surface breadth of about six feet. But necessarily they would be very slippery in wet weather and dangerous for horses. All around were numerous tree ferns, whose trunks are rough and gritty like peat and give good foothold. A lot of them were cut and pegged across the *ndawa* trunks and were just the very thing, and we used them everywhere for decking bridges. It was a great source of pride and joy to overcome obstacles in our rough-and-ready way with the materials we found in the bush. Afterwards, just before I left the Colony, when we were allowed subsidies for road maintenance and there was plenty of money to spend, I used to feel positively wicked at doing so. We then had Road Boards on which sat the leading settlers and natives of the various provinces, which regulated the making and maintenance of the roads and bridges. In one way it was a great relief because the natives were then paid for the upkeep of the main thoroughfares which they had hitherto maintained by their customary services. The latter method was quite correct when they were the only users of the roads and the owners of the soil, but when traffic increased and they were used largely by whites and Indians it was only fair that the expense of keeping them in order should be paid from the public funds.

Every other year or so we used to be scourged with influenza or dengue fever during the rainy season, when we ought to have ceased from road making. We always intended to keep quiet then, but often the exigencies of the moment kept us at work, and sometimes nearly the whole camp would be laid up with the prevailing epidemic.

It used to cause me poignant anxiety, but we got through without any casualties until 1898, after we had been twelve years road making. That was quite a good and mild season, and Naikasau was operating with the gang in the low country between the coast and Nandarivatu when he was seized by the influenza. We got him up to Waikum-bukumbu, the village at the foot of the hills, and considered him to be convalescent, but I believe he took a bath there in the cold mountain stream which flows through it, and got a violent relapse. I went down and had him carried up to Nandarivatu and put him into the room next my own. When I went to see him the last thing at night I thought he was on the mend, but at dawn the next morning I found him dead in his bed. He was a very great loss to me, as a truer, straighter man never lived, and if ever any one fought the good fight he did. Not only did he superintend the road operations in my district, but he was frequently borrowed from me by the Central Government and sent to other districts for similar purposes. However, his mantle fell upon Ratu Veli, the junior subaltern, and we carried on the work up to the time of my leaving, and constructed two hundred and fifty miles of bridle tracks practicable for horses where previously they had been unable to go.

It was a never-ending job. During the dry season we would get all the tracks into the most excellent order, then would come the rains whose torrential downpour cut them to pieces. It was like Penelope's web—what the dry weather saw accomplished the wet season destroyed. The roads were our pets and it was a point of honour to keep them in order.

It was great fun blasting, as the Fijians delighted in the noise and excitement of the operation. I had to be present at the firing of each charge in accordance with a promise made to Sir John Thurston, who feared that the recklessness and ignorance of the Fijians would lead to fatal consequences. I had the greatest difficulty in making them take cover, and they were foolhardy from want of knowledge. When we started doing a little musketry at Nandarivatu many of the men volunteered to act as markers, and suggested that they should go up alongside the target whilst practice was going on. The loud explosions at blasting afforded them the keenest pleasure and they yelled with delight. They generally do so whenever guns are fired and are connoisseurs in matters of sound. The A.N.C. were armed with the old-fashioned Martini-Henrys which gave forth loud reports. When the Lee-Enfields began to come in and the natives heard a party of blue-jackets fire a *feu de joie* with them they said the new guns were no good, and only made a

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crackling noise like fire in a bamboo brake. After firing a blast I have heard the men say : "That was something like a bang. That's the best one we've had yet." Blasting is rather an art and we were the merest tyros at it, and probably had to put in many more charges than a skilled quarryman would. At one tough rocky point on the road on the hill-side near Nandarivatu we fired thirty-three charges. When we had finished, the A.N.C. who were with me asked the number of them. When I told him I also inquired why they wanted to know. "Just to make a *vakamalolo* or a song about them." All their sports, games and doings generally are so commemorated.

In July, 1890, I was suddenly ordered to go and act as Resident Commissioner of Tholo West and Stipendiary Magistrate for Mba, Ra and the Yasawa Islands, as the officer there desired six months' leave on urgent private business. I had a most interesting time, with two delightful cruises to the Yasawas, but there is not space enough left to recount them here.

It was eight months before my colleague returned. There were no telegraphs or telephones in those days, and I did not know that he had come back until he turned up on the 1st of April, 1891, in the Government steamer *Clyde*. I handed over at once and left at daylight the next morning for Suva, and got back to Tholo East as soon as possible.

I found that *Tuka* and *Luve-ni-wai* were rife again all over the central parts of Viti Levu, and I had an exceedingly busy time. The people were very funny about it, like a lot of naughty children. They knew that it would all be discovered, and they hastened to try and make their peace by confessing and offering bribes to me. Every man is said to have his price, and mine was supposed to be the making of roads. At Narokorokoyawa the youth of Noemalu had been doing *Luve-ni-wai* with Aleferete, the district scribe, at their head. He came down and suggested that their transgression should be overlooked and they would continue the path from Narokorokoyawa to the villages further on as *mubulumbulu* or the burial or obliteration of the offence. In Mboumbutho the *Tuka* was in full cry again, and the big village of Nasongo had developed destroying angels who presided over the shores of the damned, whilst there were others who looked after the salvation of mankind and were the dispensers of immortality. Navosavakandua in his astral form appeared to them and they also received letters from him wafted by the winds or brought in the beaks of birds. Truly it was a mad world. But my return filled the votaries with consterna-

tion and they did not wait to offer to make a road, but actually made a long section of the path that was wanted to connect Mboumbutho with Undu. It was very well done, and up to the time of my leaving Fiji was still in use.

If it had rested with me I should have accepted the bribes. There was no personal advantage to myself, and the roads were most useful to the people, and works of public utility. But when I reported to the Resident Commissioner he would be no party to holding a candle to the Devil nor of condoning offences. So I had to send scores to prison, and as they had to go to the Central Jail at Suva, that institution overflowed and other Government buildings had to be used.

The inland people in the eastern and northern parts of Viti Levu had been left very much to themselves, with the result that the Government was but a name to them and there was no outward and visible sign of its existence. In Tholo West, where the Little War had occurred, a post had been established, Fort Carnarvon, and there the Union Jack and the A.N.C. garrison were tokens of the *Matanitu* or Government. Truly, there was a magisterial station at Vunindawa where I lived, but it was down on the navigable part of the Rewa, and remote from the small districts right in the central hills which were difficult of access. So the Governor, Sir John Thurston, determined to place a new armed constabulary camp in that region and place me in charge of it.

To fix upon the proper site and to study matters on the spot he decided to make a march across the Island to the northern coast at Tavua, and for that purpose came up to Vunindawa at the close of June, 1891, accompanied by the Resident Commissioner, Frank Spence, the Private Secretary, the Honourable John Berry, Commissioner of Lands and Works, and two American friends whom he had met during his mission to Washington some few years previously. These latter were Henry Quincy Adams, a great-grandson of the celebrated John Quincy Adams, the successor of Washington; his grandfather, too, had been President of the United States, and he himself had been for some years Secretary of Legation at the American Embassy in London. The other was John Lafarge, the well-known New York artist. Both were over seventy, and I have often wondered how they managed to endure the hardships and fatigue of the rough journey through the rugged hills of Viti Levu that we were just about to undertake mostly on foot.

We left Vunindawa on Monday, the 29th June, our American guests proceeding by canoe, the rest of us on foot. We made a



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stage of twelve miles that day and slept in the village of Nakorosuli, where my friend Simon Badboy was the head man. The totem of the people there is the old and hoary eel which disports itself in an adjacent pool in the Wainimala hard-by, about which mention has been made in a previous chapter. We all walked the next day until we reached the junction of the Waisomo and the Wainimala. That was the limit of the made road in those days, and the party embarked on canoes with the exception of myself and the private secretary, and we followed the track up the river-bed fording from side to side. There Spence, the private secretary, stumbled on a slippery stone and sprained his ankle which rendered him *hors de combat*, and I had to send him down the river by canoe on his way back to Suva, and in addition to my own duties I had to take over his also and act as A.D.C. to the Governor.

We reached Undu that evening and were received by the Lomai Tholo chief and people, who presented whales' teeth with much ceremony, and rendered the usual formalities customary upon State occasions. The next morning there was a great gathering of the clansmen in the village square, which had a large banyan tree in the centre surrounded by a broad platform of stones about three feet high like the *chabutra* of Indian rural life. On this sat the Governor with the Resident Commissioner and myself, and His Excellency harangued the people and admonished them about the folly of reviving the *Tuka* again and the dangers of the old heathen superstitions, a good deal of which had been happening in Muaira in which district we were then. The *Mbuli* was called to the fore and severely rebuked. I afterwards gleaned the public opinion of what was said to him, and heard one man say: "When our great *Kovana* (Governor) was talking to *Mbuli* Muaira my heart came up into my mouth, as I thought now the next thing to happen will be that the soldiers of the escort will be ordered to shoot him." I had to be always up and down among the people on an expedition of this sort to get the baggage properly sorted out and divided amongst the carriers. First of all there was the getting off of the head of the column with the Governor and his entourage, and then I had to remain to see the tail off and that the carriers did not unduly linger for a last smoke or meal. All told we mustered about two hundred and made a long straggling line, for we had to march in single file along the narrow and devious native tracks as by now we had come to the end of my roads. On my frequent passages from front to rear I used to hear a good deal of gossip, which was a very fair index of popular opinion.





THE TURTLE FLEET.

Standing out to sea followed by the prayers of the tribe that each canoe may fulfil the Ratu's levy and not have to make it good with their own bodies.



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The track for the next three days followed the beds of the Wailoa and Nasongo Rivers, which it crossed many times according as the beds of shingle on either side gave better going. It was altogether too rough for our elderly American friends, and I had a *tavata* or native litter made for each of them in which they were carried. They were made with saplings, and to make them soft covered with grass over which mats were spread and so was provided a certain amount of rough comfort. They were borne on the shoulders of four stalwart bearers, one at each corner, which placed them rather high up, and there was a danger of the occupants being tilted out. At one stage of our journey there was a nasty rocky cliff round which we had to sidle on a narrow slippery ledge. I had not seen our guests for some time, so I waited there for them. When they did turn up I found that their bearers had lashed them head and foot on to their litters to prevent them slipping off in bad places. I should not have been surprised if they had shown signs of nervousness, as the men in charge of them were a wild-looking lot, and but a few short years before had been cannibals. However, neither had turned a hair; they quite recognised the necessity of the treatment to which they had been subjected and the good faith of those who inflicted it. They were as jolly as possible and treated the whole matter as a joke, and eventually I delivered them sound and hearty on the northern coast where they and the Governor and the rest of his party embarked on the *Clyde*, in which they returned to Suva.

When we got to Nasongo, which is the last village on the Wainimala watershed before the eastern ascent of Mount Victoria is made, we halted for a couple of days to give ourselves and our party a slight rest from the fatigues of the rough journey on foot, and to permit of the settlement of certain judicial and administrative details. We left again on the morning of Saturday, the 4th July, 1901. Just before we started, when I was able to have a word or two quietly with the Governor, I asked him if he had recollected that it was the glorious fourth of July. He replied that it had quite slipped his memory and that he thought his American friends had overlooked it also. He told me to keep quiet and say nothing, but that, if possible, I should produce something extra to drink when we halted for lunch, and that I should warn the commander of the escort, Lieutenant Ratu Epeli, to be prepared to fire a salute.

We followed the same route which I had used in 1886, with the heart-breaking climb up the Vunisukau. I remember how thirsty were all those on foot, and with what delight we hailed the appear-

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ance of the thoughtful Ananias who skipped to and fro with a big camp kettle full of icy cold water drawn from a hillside spring. Of course on such an occasion as this he had not failed to report for duty, for "where the carcass is there will the eagles be gathered together." A vice-regal progress in Fiji is marked by the slaughter of many pigs, much drinking of *kava* and prodigious feasts. In ancient Fijian life all labour was paid for in sumptuous donations of food, and usually when an official tour was made through the hills many attached themselves to the cortège for the sake of the good living. On this occasion Sir John Thurston and I spied one gentleman, whom we dubbed as our "general utility man," who had strolled in casually and joined our train. He was indeed most handy, acting as our official carver. That in all public Fijian functions is a most important and delicate post. It has already been observed that at feasts pigs are presented baked whole and have to be cut up afterwards for distribution, and the man who does it has to be a past-master in native ceremonial and a skilful dissector. The head is the joint of honour and has to be given to the most important of the guests, and the animal has to be sliced up so that no one party gets more than another, and frequently there is a good deal of heartburning over the division. However, our man always rose to the occasion, and was full of tact and ready to take up any little duty. For instance, the Governor's *matanivanua* or head talking man, native A.D.C. and general factotum, was elderly and corpulent, and was often not to be found when thanks had to be returned for presentations of food and *kava*. Then our general utility man would throw himself into the breach and perform the customary ceremonies. Not only was he our carver but our toastmaster also, and at our official dinners here in England when the stately toastmaster gets up to perform his duty my memory goes back to the Fijian wilds and our general utility man.

We halted for lunch in the shady and cool grove above the Vunisukau where I had previously rested on my first journey. I produced some bottles of claret, and Sir John Thurston toasted his guests and the Great Republic on this their Independence Day. I think that Messrs. Adams and Lafarge had really quite forgotten all about their national anniversary, and were genuinely surprised at our recollection of it. I think, too, that Adams was almost more English than the English, and that his heart was entirely so. We were all very happy together and felt quite like a family party, Sir John being connected with the family from whom Miles Standish sprang, and I with that of William Brewster of *Mayflower* celebrity. It

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goes without saying that the glorious bangs made by the firing of the salute filled our following with joy, and I heard some of them remark that the noise would roll down the valleys of Vosa and startle the villagers far and wide. The only discordant note was a growl from old Carew, the Resident Commissioner, who said he objected to volley firing as it would disturb the equanimity of the inland people and give rise to disturbing rumours, and I think he was right.

That night we camped at Matanavono, the source of the Nasongo River, and the next day we reached the Valley of Wana, at the western foot of Mount Victoria. There we were met by Sidney Marriott, the Resident Commissioner of West Tholo, and by some of the local native officials. Marriott remained the night only with us and then returned to his duty at Mba. We moved on the next day to the village of Namatakula, which is 2700 feet above the sea. We remained there for two days resting in that cool and salubrious climate, where nightly the thermometer sank into the low fifties. Poor old John Lafarge was in rather delicate health, but I heard him say to Adams how much better the food tasted there than it did at Tahiti, from whence they had come to stay with Sir John Thurston. Inwardly I felt elated and took it as a compliment to my catering and general care of the Expedition. But I should have ascribed it to the cool crisp air of that delightful spot, as I had been there once before when I was acting for Marriott on a forced march which I had to make from Fort Carnarvon to Rakiraki towards the end of 1890. I broke down on the way and rested at Namatakula for a couple of days, where the delightful climate set me up again entirely.

Whilst we were there I accompanied Sir John Thurston in a stroll about the environs of the village. After we had got towards the edge of it I saw that we were being dogged by two boys. Suddenly they jumped forward and threw themselves in front of the Governor and each embraced one of his legs, which they kissed and bedewed with their tears, the elder of the two at the same time holding a *tambua* aloft. They came to beg for the release of their father who was a "lifer" in Suva Jail. His name was Tavaiyalo, which means "The Dissector of the Soul," and he had been condemned to death for the murder of his wife shortly after the assumption of the sovereignty of the group by Queen Victoria. It was so soon after that event and so much before the people had grasped the effect of the new regime, and being accompanied by certain extenuating circumstances that the death sentence was commuted into penal



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servitude for life, and he had already served fifteen years. Sir John Thurston knew all the circumstances of the case as Tavaialo was now old, and being of good conduct had worked as a gardener in the Government House grounds. His Excellency did not take long to make known his decision, and there and then granted the boys' petition, and instructed me to keep them in charge until he got back to Suva, when I was to send them down to him. This was done, and "The Dissector of the Soul" was delivered into their arms. They brought him up to me, and he and they were ever afterwards my loyal and devoted friends, and although I had only been accidentally with the Governor at the preferring of the petition I was ever afterwards associated with his act of clemency. Old Tavaialo was a thin-faced and intellectual-looking man, and, as far as I can recollect, was alive when nineteen years afterwards I finally left the scene of my labours.

We left Namatakula on Wednesday, the 8th July, and lunched at Nandarivatu, which subsequently was my home for eighteen years. There the party split up, the Governor, his guests and Carew proceeding to Tavua where the *Clyde* was waiting for them. They went from thence to Mba and returning up coast called in at Nanukuloa, the capital of the Ra Province, where John Berry and I joined them again after we had made our way thither via the head-waters of the Wainimbuka, over part of the way which I had followed on my pilgrimage to the god-land in 1886. From Nanukuloa the Governor and his party returned to Suva, whilst I walked over to the Wainimbuka and took my canoe to Vunindawa. Our expedition, from the time the Governor and his party arrived at Vunindawa on the 27th June until they left Nanukuloa on board the *Clyde* on the 16th July, occupied three weeks, during which time we had not a single drop of rain and throughout were favoured with the most glorious weather. Our only untoward incident was the spraining of poor Spence's ankle.

In October of each year the annual Fijian budget is discussed in the Legislative Council. In that month following our march across Viti Levu it was decided that a new inland province should be established and known as Tholo North, with a Resident Commissioner in charge, for which the necessary appropriations and grants were made, and I was notified that I had been selected for the post. It did not come into effect until the following year, and I did not actually take up my quarters there until August, 1892. But in the meantime I was occupied in doing preliminary work, exploring and reporting upon the most likely spot for the new station. Eventually

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Nandarivatu was chosen, and I camped there on the 23rd May and pegged out the lines on the following morning, the 24th May, the Queen's birthday, 1892. I think that I was always a loyal man, and it pleased me to think that I commenced my work in the new province on such an auspicious day.

In the following June Sir John and Lady Thurston, with their family, accompanied by the private secretaries, nurses, domestic servants, etc., came up to Vunindawa and remained for a fortnight. Sir John wished to see for himself what had been done in Lomai Tholo, and to go to Narokorokoyawa by the new road. Accordingly, leaving the children at Vunindawa, we went up thither, the Governor and the private secretaries on horseback and Lady Thurston in a rickshaw. I think I have already told that on this journey Sir John's horse put his foot through one of our bridges and rolled his master off. I was away at the rear of the column looking after the rickshaw, as it was the first time a wheeled conveyance had been over our tracks. I had ridden often enough and was not troubled by any thoughts of the horsemen. When, however, the column checked I heard gasps of dismay from those just ahead of me and fears expressed lest *Mbuli* Nadaravakawalu, through whose district we were passing, should be called out and summarily shot. Lady Thurston wanted to know what the matter was, but I managed to conceal the truth. I knew nothing serious had happened, as a man came down the line immediately with a reassuring message to me from His Excellency.

We halted for a night at a roadside village, reaching Narokorokoyawa the next day. We stayed there a day and then went down river. At the next village, Mbotenaulu, we had to discard our horses and rickshaw as the road terminated there. I had Lady Thurston carried in a *tavata* to Undu, and there we embarked on our canoes.

Sir John Thurston was greatly pleased with all he saw, and convened a great meeting of the chiefs at Vunindawa to express his appreciation to them. As a rule each year there was a Great Council of the chiefs at which the people meet the Governor and hold a sort of annual parliament, about which reference has already been made. At these assemblies it was the custom for the Governor to distribute presents to the value of one hundred pounds. This year, 1892, for some reason the Great Council did not meet, and the money that should have been spent was available, and the Governor decided to buy one hundred pounds' worth of road tools, such as spades, picks, etc., and give them to the inland people. A gathering

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was therefore arranged at Vunindawa, for which the neighbouring districts supplied the customary feasts in the way of pigs and oxen roasted whole, with stacks of yams, *ndalo* and *yangona*, and the presentation of the road tools was made with great solemnity and public rejoicings. They were distributed to the districts who had made the roads, and thus the vice-regal visit to Tholo East was concluded.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### The End of the Way

**T**HIMBA is the Fijian word signifying to die, and when decease took place the soul had to pass through the purgatory of the Spirit's Way until it reached the lofty precipices of Nakauvandra, the Sacred Mount. There occurred the *thimbathimba*, the second or minor death, after which, freed from all earthly dross, the spirit flew to Burotu, the Isle of the Blest, in the far north-west. Ere that state of beatitude could be attained many and dire were the trials and tribulations encountered on the Way which was called the *Tuleita*. It passed right through Nandarivatu, which means in English "The Dish of Stone." The name is taken from a flat slab of volcanic rock which lies embedded there, with its surface just level with the soil, a few steps from the side of the Way. On it are two small indentations like in appearance to the wooden platters on which food is served, which are called *ndari*. They belonged to a mischievous spirit, the *Taukei* or Lord of Nandarivatu, who awaited those painfully travelling to the next world. As they drew near they found the bracken on either side of the path drawn across it and twisted together, which caused them to stray and turn towards the place of the dishes, one of which contained nice ripe bananas and the other inexpressible nastiness. Then their irate guardian roared forth in a terrible voice, "Are your ears pierced?" Should those of the trembling soul be so, he was told to refresh himself with the bananas and was allowed to pass on unhurt. If only one was pierced or neither, the unfortunate was compelled to eat the objectionable contents of the other platter, was savagely beaten with a club and driven away. When Sir George O'Brien, who was our Governor from 1897-1902, paid his first visit to Nandarivatu, I showed him the rock and told the legend, which he said was very disgusting. It is, but the tales of primitive people are not generally acceptable to delicate ears. Presently I hope to say something prettier about the *Tuleita*, which in addition to being

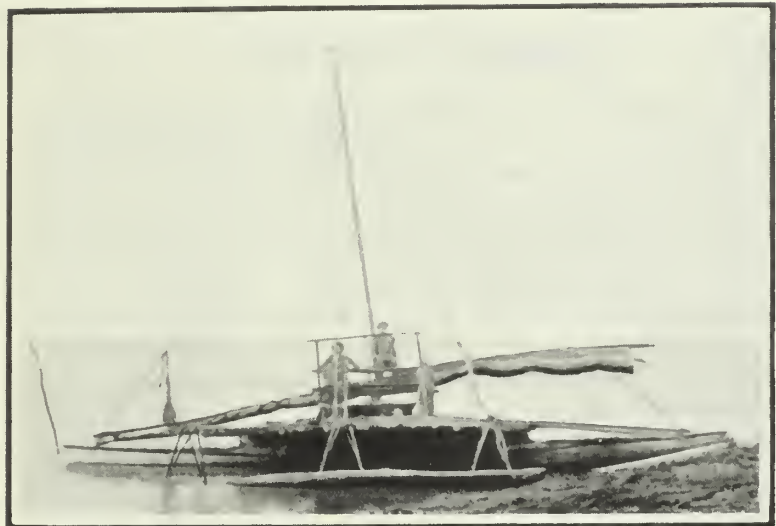
the road to Paradise was the main highway to the west, along which I often had to travel in the ordinary course of duty.

I never could find out whether any religious idea was associated with the piercing of ears. As far as I could ascertain it was a mere fashion. Many of my old acquaintances had the lobes of their ears horribly distended by carrying in them small joints of bamboos which formed their tobacco boxes, and in addition they kept pipes, clasp knives and all sorts of small articles there. Although most disfiguring, it was to them a matter of convenience. Why those who did not conform to this habit were ill-treated can only be attributed to the malice and vagaries of the evil spirits who tormented poor dead souls as they sought the way to rest and peace.

Unhappily, the Resident Commissioner of Tholo West had to go on sick leave all 1895 and 1896, during which time I acted for him in addition to my own duty in Tholo North. The distance between Nandarivatu and Fort Carnarvon, the western station, was forty miles, and the path between the two places the *Tuleita*. It was possible to use ponies on it, but there were frequent heart-breaking bits where one had to dismount and lead the animals up and down, and so I generally did the journey on foot and thus became intimately acquainted with the legends of the way. I used to walk the first day to old Nandrau in a deep gorge of the Singatoka River, part of the descent to which was down a sheer precipice. That was a stage of sixteen miles, and the next day the remaining twenty-four were traversed.

My cicerone and guide was generally Simon or Saimone as he was there called, the Chief Constable of Nandrau. He was a splendid companion, steeped in the lore of countryside, and gifted with a never-failing flow of pleasant conversation. At the outset of our journeys he watched for the omens as to whether they would be propitious or not. The most common was furnished by a pretty little bird, the *Tikivili*, so named onomatopœically from its sharp cry. Heard on the right it was good and meant a successful journey with right royal feeds at the various calling-places, whilst on the left it foretold disaster. Saimone assured me that in the olden times, if the latter occurred, parties on the war-trail at once abandoned their quest and returned home. Another good portent was to meet with a tiger moth, the *Kumukumure*, in which are embodied the spirits of departed ancestors. Should the insect light upon one the right thing to do is to pick it up, kiss and return it gently to the air. I heard, too, that when this moth dies it turns into the *Gingy*, the little red-breasted robin of Fiji. Many yarns were spun as we walked





A TYPICAL FISHING CANOE.

The halliards are passed through the crutch at the masthead. See what happened to that mystic craft, the Rong-o-Voka, page 90.



THE FLAGSHIP OF THE TURTLE FLEET.

The Tunindan, or Head Fisherman's canoe. He was responsible that each canoe should make a catch of ten turtles, or substitute any deficiency with human bodies for the larder of his suzerain the Ratu.



along, but from sheer fatigue I neglected to note them down at the time and so they were forgotten.

Four or five miles from Nandarivatu, on the road to Fort Carnarvon, is a small plateau of barren red earth upon which nothing will grow, which is studded all over with little mounds like childrens' graves. They are said to be formed by those forlorn babes who die before their parents. Here they stop and play until their mothers come along who then take their hands and lead them along the Way to the next world.

A little further west is a small stream, the Water of Twins, which has to do with the prosaic affairs of everyday life. Thither go to drink those not blessed with posterity, and for their faith get rewarded with a double event. Still proceeding westward a long and narrow ridge is reached, a veritable razor-back, which divides the Singatoka and Mba Rivers. A long dry stretch of this intervenes before a beautiful little cool spring is encountered. There the tired souls on the weary Way to the Holy Mount stop and slake their thirst, and when people on beds of sickness, parched by fever, continually demand drink the bystanders shake their head and say, "This is the desire for the waters of the *Tuleita* and soon will our friend quench it there." Not far from it is Numbutautau, the haunt of Tuitharatharasala, the Sweeper of the Way, whose treatment of errant damsels has already been told. Every inch of the way is marked by some legendary spot, which would require a book to itself were all to be recorded.

Although we lived at Nandarivatu right at the very haunt of the Lord of the Stone Dish, we were untroubled by the shades on their way to the next world. It was otherwise at Fort Carnarvon, where the ghost of a man who had been hanged disturbed the nocturnal peace of the garrison. At midnight he was supposed to wander round the camp, and at times terrified the sentinel at the main guard who would rouse his comrades by the discharge of his rifle when the big *lali* or native war drum would boom forth and wake the inhabitants from sleep. I never heard his footsteps myself, although he was supposed to pass close to the Commandant's quarters, which at night were generally left to my sole use. Fortunately I am not psychic, and although I often had to sleep in solitary places supposed to be haunted I was never troubled by ghostly visitants. It was different with some of my colleagues, who were disturbed by undefinable feelings and noises for which they could not account.

On 25th August, 1892, the Government despatch boat, the *Clyde*, landed me, Native Officer Naikasau and twenty-five rank and

file of the Armed Native Constabulary at Tavua, from whence we marched to Nandarivatu and took possession of the camp there, which consisted of about six grass houses which *Mbuli* Tavua and his people had erected for us on the spot I had pegged out on the previous 24th May. Our camp was just a small place on the broad lands of the Ndala clan, which according to tradition will hold their demesne as long as they have an albino among their number. They had had one always, and when we arrived he was represented by one Samuela (Samuel). Near the centre of their possessions was a pool, said to be unfathomable, probably a small extinct crater. It was called the *Tombu ni Rea*, which being interpreted means the Pool of the Albino. At one side of it grew a white barked *vung-a* or myrtle, which was said also to be an albino, supposed to be significant of the hereditary peculiarity of the Ndala.

The possessions of these people, together with their small affiliated tribe of Wana, those who told me that they had held the summit of Mount Victoria since the Creation, amounted to about thirty thousand acres, and the sole survivors of the united clan did not exceed thirty men, women and children all told, not one of whom resided on the family property. They were dispersed, some in the coast villages of Tavua and a few, principally those of Wana, in the hamlets of Nandrau, close by their old family mountain. Although the Deed of Cession which established the British Sovereignty provided that all native lands thereby became vested in the Crown no steps were ever taken to carry this measure into effect, and they remained in the possession of their hereditary owners. Except in a few isolated instances there is no individual proprietorship in land in Fiji, which is held by the unit of the family and the tribe. To all intents and purposes Ndala was what the natives call a *vanua lala*, an empty land, being put to no use whatever by those who claimed to be the owners. When I was sent to Nandarivatu, Sir John Thurston thought that too much latitude had been given in recognising the titles to these waste lands and that they should be regarded as Crown property. However, we subsequently came to the conclusion that we had better not go back upon the custom which had become part of the native policy, which was in all cases to recognise the right of the Fijian proprietors to the usufruct of their estates as long as the clan was in existence, with the reservation that the Crown was the *ultimus haeres*. Land could not be sold without the permission of the Government, but the leasing of it was encouraged. This was done to guard the people against their own improvidence, as prior to annexation they had alienated much of their property,

and in time probably would have dissipated it all, and instead, to provide that a small steady income should be derived from their properties. At the same time that these privileges were conferred it was acknowledged by the natives that they held their lands by the grace of the British Sovereign, to whom they had indeed ceded their domains, and in acknowledgment yearly they did homage and fealty by the presentation of the first-fruits of their yams, the staple crop. All the tribes within my jurisdiction annually performed this ceremony to me as the King's representative the *Kai Ndala*, presenting their first-fruits with a *tambua* and a turtle, the Royal fish. They were then resident in the maritime villages of Tavua, where the King of the Fishes was the proper offering of the paramount chief, as the dish to be eaten with the yams.

We arranged the settlement at Nandarivatu by paying an annual quit rent to the Ndala people as long as they existed, the property passing to the Crown as the ultimate heir upon the demise of the tribe. This created a rather curious position, the Government paying through me twice a year the rent to owners who in turn annually did homage and fealty to the King's representative in acknowledgment that they held their domains from him.

The natives of Tholo North owned large areas of unused land which they leased both to whites and Indians, and so twice in each year had a very happy rent audit. It opened up the country and provided the lucky owners with pocket money, whilst the land retained for their own use furnished an ample supply of food and a pleasant occupation in its cultivation. The non-enforcement of the Deed of Cession as regards the assumption of the land by the Crown has been made the grounds of much cavilling by some of the Colonists, who maintain that it has retarded settlement and development through the difficulties in arranging leases with the native owners. On the other hand, it may be urged that it has kept the Fijians loyal and contented, and barring the troubles which ensued before the final relinquishment of cannibalism, which caused the Little War in 1876, there has then been no fighting. Before the close of this chapter I hope to set forth the devoted services of the natives during the Great War, and their recent assistance in the grave Indian disturbances caused by Gandhi's unscrupulous propaganda.

Almost immediately upon our arrival at Nandarivatu we began to find out that the ordinary native house which had been put up for us by the Tavua people was quite unsuited to the climate of the place, situated as it was at the northern end of the long valley, whose



southern extremity was in the Queen's Pass eleven miles away on the slopes of Mount Victoria. We were at the mouth of a long funnel through which the sea and land breezes howled, strongest at night, which is contrary to the "Song of the Trade Wind":

"I'm strongest at noon, yet under the moon  
I stiffen the bunt of the sail."

But then our weather was locally brewed in the lofty mountains at our back culminating at Tomanivei. The temperature after dark was usually in the low fifties and the average mean, day and night, was sixty-seven and a half. Our occupation of the new post was quite an event in local history and was, of course, celebrated in a song, the opening line of which was:

*"Nandarivatu sa koro liliua,"*

which merely means it was a cold place. Part of the Governor's plan in establishing it was to provide a cool hill station to which Europeans could resort in the hot season, as well as an outward and visible sign of power in that remote part of Viti Levu. He quite recognised that something more substantial than the ordinary native structures would be required, and to that end a draft of twenty youths from the Native Technical School at Yanawai on Vanua Levu was sent over to us immediately after our arrival. They had been taught sawing and carpentering, and they set to work felling the kauri pines which grew in abundance all around our camp, from which they procured the planking required in the erection of wooden dwellings and also the shingles for roofing.

It will already have been gleaned that there has been an hereditary clan of carpenters from time immemorial, and generally the race has an aptitude for mechanics. As soon as I had got the roads into order a bit, wheeled transport in the shape of bullock drays was started, and when they broke down my handy men effected the repairs and made the yokes, and on one occasion even made a wheel. I was always a student of Indian life and read of the use of pack-bullocks in field transport, and speedily we employed them too. At first Australian pack-saddles were tried, but were found heavy and apt to give the animals sore backs, and we soon invented a field equipment of our own. Owing to the extent of my districts, as not only was I Commissioner of Tholo North, but also Stipendiary Magistrate for the large Province of Ra, my life was rather nomadic. My office was the roadside, and whenever I had a few hours' halt I

tried to keep even with my files and work off my papers. An old white bullock called Jack carried my official paraphernalia. When I acquired him and a dray it was still the winter of our poverty and there was very little money available, but up the Ra coast was a derelict sugar mill, where I managed to buy a couple of bullock carts for £1 10s. apiece. I was very proud of my transport system, and up to the time of my retirement was the only officer who employed beasts of burden and wheeled vehicles for land carriage.

When my senior native officer, Lieutenant Naikasau, died in 1898, he was succeeded by Ratu Veli, the junior subaltern, and until he left eleven years afterwards he was my right-hand man. He learned to work with a road tracer, and I could with all confidence send him to peg out new ways which I always found properly graded. He picked up blacksmithing, and all our little village water supplies were laid by him. Sir George O'Brien considered that many of the ailments of Fijian life were due to the use of impure water, and he would always find money with which to bring supplies from fresh springs by means of pipes. In our rough mountain transit they sometimes got damaged, and now and then they were carried away by floods. Then the screws by which they were joined together got out of order and had to be re-threaded by tools called stocks and dies. I never had any mechanical aptitude, and all that sort of thing was a mystery to me. However, Ratu Veli mastered all those little arts, and could use the different instruments required for laying and maintaining water supplies. Not only did he do that but he also built the cement reservoirs and knew how to mix the exact proportions of cement, sand and stone necessary for them. Shortly after Sir George O'Brien arrived it was decided to construct a telephone line between Suva and Mba, linking up various other spots en route, and it entailed a traverse of one hundred and fifty miles. I was called upon to do that part which went through Tholo North and East, a distance of fifty-two miles, and after its completion we had to keep it in order. As it passed principally through heavy forest land trees were constantly crashing across the line and smashing the wires. Veli was quite equal to the emergency and taught the linemen in charge of the various sections how to use soldering irons and how to mend the breaks. The work was done only in a rough and ready manner, but we kept the line going.

Veli was of a gay and joyous nature, always ready to laugh and sing, and intensely fond of music, and ready to tackle any job that he was called upon to do. An account of his marriage, according

to the custom of war, as his comrades styled it, has already been given, and a hint that prior to that my friend was rather prone to amatory adventures. Just after we pitched our camp at Nandarivatu there was a terrible scandal which I have always marked in my mind as the Great Elopement. Our uniforms were not without effect, and the ladies round about doted on the military. Every six weeks I had to ride to Rakiraki, forty miles away up the Ra coast, where there was a sugar mill, at which a number of Indian coolies were employed. Their presence and other causes rendered the periodical holding of Courts necessary. Horse-flesh was scarce with me in those days and I usually rode all alone there and back, which was a mistake, as on several occasions I met with accidents such as my pony falling with me in bad parts. Afterwards, when my little stud grew, as, among other things, we bred ponies and cattle at Nandarivatu, I used to take an orderly or two with me. That made the journey much more cheerful and easy, as animals in company always go better. It added to my dignity too, and enhanced the respect given by the natives. We were too apt in the old impecunious days to disregard native opinion which attaches great importance to a little outward show and pomp.

I was returning one afternoon from Rakiraki and had reached the outskirts of Tavua from whence the road turned inland to Nandarivatu. There I was met by the Chief Constable of the place who intimated that he had something to report. "Sir," said he, "we think that all the girls of Korovou have bolted up to Nandarivatu. For some time they have been flirting outrageously with the soldiers, so the day before yesterday we had them up before the village council where we admonished them, and then we cut off all their *tombe*, and yesterday they disappeared and did not come home to sleep, and we think that they have fled to Nandarivatu." *Tombe* are the love-locks worn by young girls which are cut off at marriage, and their absence denotes the matronly state.

I rode on to Waikumbukumbu, the village at the foot of the Nandarivatu escarpment where the road rises two thousand feet in the last five miles, necessitating many zigzags, and dusk fell upon my weary pony and myself ere we traversed the last laps. Just before we reached the top I became aware of faint whistles in the forest which surrounded the camp. I dismounted at the guard-room door, where I was greeted by the European sergeant-major, who reported all well. He was not a Fijian scholar and was evidently unaware of anything untoward having occurred. I drew him on one side and told him of what the Chief Constable of Tavua had

reported and signified my intention of sounding the general alarm at midnight, and of having the roll called then, and that in the meantime he was to hold his peace. We could not then afford the luxury of maintaining a full guard as we were all so busy trying to get the camp properly built, and all we had was an orderly who slept in the guard house and sounded the hours from 6 a.m. till 10 p.m. on the big *lali* or war drum as was the custom on the Fijian Government stations. At midnight I roused the orderly out, told him to get a couple of rifles from the rack and load them with blank cartridge. Then he beat the highest point of war on the *lali* and he and I fired the rifles off. Like lightning some seven men, mostly good steady boys from Tholo East were at my side. I ordered these to stand to their arms and fall in. Then from the surrounding bush faint noises began to be heard, and every now and then a frightened man made his way into camp and was promptly made a prisoner.

My next problem was how to deal with the matter. I knew that if my men were impleaded in the native courts they would all be surely sent to jail, and my detachment would be ruined. So I assembled a court-martial at once and fined Veli, who was then a sergeant, a pound, and the rest a month's pay each, which was seven shillings. As I anticipated, the Tavua people duly lodged a complaint with the Native Department, the head of which wrote a furious minute to the Governor demanding our heads. His Excellency was very angry too, and wrote to me that he contemplated ordering the offenders to be returned to headquarters at Suva and furnishing Nandarivatu with a new draft. I pleaded earnestly for my men, to whom I was sincerely attached, especially Veli, and saved them at the cost of a snubbing, being told that such a strong personal attachment to those under my command was subversive of discipline. However, I have never regretted my action then as it kept Veli with me until an elderly relative of his died who was *Roko Tui Mathuata* or native Lieutenant-Governor of the Mathuata Province, one of the most important districts of Vanua Levu. When some of us went to King Edward's coronation in 1902 he went with me, and afterwards remained at Nandarivatu till 1909. In those days he was a slim young officer, but now under the effects of the loaves and fishes of his native province he begins to show signs of corpulence. He belongs to the chief family of Mathuata and is of the highest rank there, and it is a tribute to his steadfastness that he worked so long and hard at Nandarivatu, and although many of our own young countrymen were sent there to gain an insight into native life and country administrative routine the actual practical



work of building the station and keeping it going was effected by my Fijian assistants.

Gradually the station grew in size and importance and, after the relinquishment of Fort Carnarvon as an armed post in 1898, part of the garrison was transferred to Nandarivatu. Many young officers were sent there for training. Most of them have since distinguished themselves in the Great War, and now hold important positions in the Colonial service. Oliver Griffiths, the son of one of my earliest assistants, was born at Nandarivatu and was present at Zeebrugge. R. R. Kane got the M.C. and bar as a Captain with the Irish Rifles, and is now one of the Commissioners in the Solomon Islands. Cyril Francis immediately on the outbreak of the War received a commission as Captain in the East Kents, and afterwards served in the King's African Rifles in the campaign against von Lettow-Vorbeck. He was a splendid drill, and had passed through the School of Musketry at Hythe and of Military Instruction at Chelsea, and had the gift of training soldiers. He also studied law during his leaves, was duly called to the Bar and is now Attorney-General of British Honduras, where he has acted as Chief Justice also. In the Crown Colony service one fills many posts and in turn are administrators, lawyers, and soldiers, and work much harder than the general public knows. Herbert Henniker-Heaton, who was also at Nandarivatu, is now Colonial Secretary of the Gambier, and Kenneth Allardyce, who succeeded me in Tholo North, afterwards became Commissioner of Native Affairs in Fiji, and subsequently commanded the Fijian Labour Contingent in France and in Italy. James Stuart is now a first-grade Commissioner in Fiji, and spent his last leave in helping to look after our little native force in France and Italy during the Great War.

I must not forget to mention the Honourable W. E. Russell, who acted for me on several occasions when I was on leave, and was my assistant in Tholo East. He carried on my policy very loyally and is now, I am glad to say, about top of the list of the District Commissioners, and a member of the Legislative Council of Fiji.

Another of my *élèves* was Ratu Lala Sukuna, the eldest son of the late Ratu Joni Mandraiwini, who was *Roko* or Native Lieutenant-Governor of the province of Ra, of which I was the judicial officer. This young chief, Sukuna, before he went to school in New Zealand, lived with me at Nandarivatu. Subsequently he came home and entered at Wadham College, Oxford, where he was when the War broke out. He immediately tried to join up, but owing to red-tape and foolish colour regulation was rejected for service in our armies.



He was determined, however, not to miss the Great Adventure, and went to France and entered the Foreign Legion, in which he distinguished himself and was severely wounded in the great French push in Champagne in 1915. As he was a chief of the highest rank the authorities in Fiji became very anxious for his return, as the service there was greatly depleted by the number of those who went home to fight. The small colony of Fiji had, all told, a European population, men, women and children, of only some five thousand, from which nearly eight hundred of the men joined up, and the Government bureaux were mostly carried on by girls and old men. The Colonial Office therefore asked the French Government to grant Sukuna's discharge, and he was sent back to Fiji. Soon after he got home the Labour Corps for service in France was being organised, and he joined as a N.C.O. and went to Europe with it. After the Peace, Sukuna resumed his course at Oxford, where he took his B.A. and LL.B. and was called to the Bar. Last year he returned to Fiji and once more took up his duty in the Colonial Civil Service.

The Governors and Acting Governors with their wives and families, from the time of Sir John Thurston to the time of Sir Everard im Thurn, who was the last chief under whom I served, spent the hot seasons at Nandarivatu. Sir Henry Jackson was an exception to this, but he was barely two years with us before he went on promotion to Trinidad. The Government House parties used to land at Tavua, and from thence to Nandarivatu, fourteen miles; their transport was my job. With railroads or motors that would be an easy task, but with only native carriers, ponies, bullocks and a rough mountain track it was a sufficiently arduous undertaking. At first it was almost all done by Fijian porters, but gradually as I got my animal and wheeled transport into order they took the place of human labour. I always gave a sigh of relief when I had got successfully through what I called my trooping season. The most difficult of my charges was Sir George O'Brien and his sister. They insisted upon travelling at night, and one of the preliminary precautions was to get reed torches cut and strewed all along the route, by which we lighted the way on dark nights. Neither the Governor nor Miss O'Brien and her maid would ride, and they had to be conveyed in rickshaws. The Fijian rickshaw-men like to pretend they are horses and prance about and decorate themselves and their little carriages with ferns and vines and all sorts of greenery. With the O'Briens nothing of that sort of thing was permitted, and I was not allowed to approach them on horseback. At first I used to ride

up alongside and ask Miss O'Brien if she were comfortable, but the maid warned me not to do so as her mistress was nervous about animals. I usually walked as we were not allowed to go more than two miles an hour. It was a long, weary business, and as a rule it took twelve hours from the time we left the steamer's side until we reached Nandarivatu. I used to regard Miss O'Brien as a real princess, as she generally found the pea under the seventh mattress and the rose leaves of her existence crumpled.

All the others were always very kind and considerate and treated the whole affair as a huge picnic. Two of the easiest to get on with were Sir Everard and Lady im Thurn. They both were good sportsmen, if I may so speak of a lady, and were able to ride. They loved the cool bracing air of Nandarivatu, and always brought up large house parties, not only in the hot season, but at all times of the year. Often, too, instead of returning by water they hazarded the great adventure of going back to Suva overland, which entailed a journey of one hundred and ten miles, forty-four of which were by land, on our sure-footed hill ponies to Vatuva on the Wainimala, thence by canoe to Viria, another twenty-eight miles, and the rest by steamer. There never was any difficulty or grumbling with them, and they did a great deal for Nandarivatu in the way of adding to the buildings, much of which was done at His Excellency's sole expense, and I cannot speak too highly of their invariable kindness to myself and my wife. Not only were they good to us at Nandarivatu, but whenever we visited Suva we were their guests at Government House.

The year before I left Fiji for good, in 1909, Sir Everard sent Admiral Sir Richard Poore, Commander-in-Chief on the Australian station, who was visiting Fiji in H.M.S. *Powerful*, round to Tavua in the *Ranandi*, the Government yacht. With him was his Flag-Captain Prowse and his Flag-Lieutenant Fisher, and to look after them came our Colonial Secretary, now Sir Eyre Hutson and Governor of British Honduras, and Kenneth Allardyce, who was acquainted with the way across the island. I rode with them as far as Vatuva, and we had a most pleasant journey in memory of which the Admiral and the others sent me from Sydney a very handsome silver cigar case with "From Tavua to Vatuva" on it, as well as the date and their initials. In a little less than seven years afterwards poor Prowse was to perish in command of the *Queen Mary* at Jutland, but how could a man die better!

Although this book is principally concerned with the Fijian hill people it may not be altogether out of place, perhaps, to say a few

words about the Indian immigrants, who at one time bade fair to swamp the native population, and who have made themselves felt even in the remote fastnesses of Viti Levu. A census of the Colony taken in 1911 showed the number of Fijians to be 87,096 and the Indians 40,286. I left Fiji in May, 1910, and it seemed to me then that our settlers from Hindustan were the happiest of people. Upon arrival they worked under indenture for five years, after which they could either return to their own country or settle in Fiji, and the proof of their contentment was that ninety-nine per cent of them elected to remain, and most of these leased small blocks of land from the Fijians on which they grew rice, dhal and other food stuffs dear to the agricultural classes of India from which country they were principally recruited. They also kept cows and goats, and an acre of good land would ordinarily support a coolie family. There was no such thing as famine, and instead of the continual want and poverty of the land of their birth, the mere sensation of hunger was pleasant, as the means of satisfying it was always available. The immigration started in 1879, and so, when I left in 1910, we had had thirty years' experience of it, and statistics show how the Hindu population had grown and thrived.

I had a great deal to do with assisting the Indian settlers in getting leases of native lands, many of which I pegged out myself. We used to have an ordinance which permitted of the magistrates marking out blocks of not more than ten acres, on account of the scarcity of duly qualified surveyors. I had read all Meadows Taylor's books, and was deeply interested in Indian rural life. The new environment affected the religious observances of these immigrants, and tended to a general subversion of morals, making it more difficult to keep them in order. They ate all sorts of unlawful things, and did many things which were wrong according to their own ideas of morality. This was at first, before any of their own holy men appeared upon the scene; afterwards when some of them came along they insisted upon the due performance of worship and ancient custom, and then matters improved. One in particular in my district was a very good man, under whose auspices there was much less Court work. I tried to get disputes settled as far as possible by their own *panchayets* or local councils, and by the adoption of a measure of Home Rule suitable in the circumstances. The majority of these new settlers were Hindus, although there was a fair proportion of Mohammedans, who kept their festival of the Mohurrum in a small way as they had done in India. But there seemed to be no religious animosity, and Hindu sword-players and

jugglers used to dance and take a place in the processions of the rival persuasion.

These new little communities were very keen on education, and sent their children to whatever schools were available, irrespective of creed, and it seemed to me that here was a splendid opportunity for the inculcation of Christianity to which most of the educational establishments belonged, and many of the young Indians attended them. The new country and life in a British Colony had its effect in broadening their outlook, and tended to a greater liberality of ideas. It seemed, too, at one time as if a great part of the Western Pacific stood a chance of becoming Hinduised, and that the tide that had reached Fiji might spread to the other islands under British rule. But owing to circumstances to be presently mentioned the Indian onrush has been retarded. In thirty years the Indians have become nearly equal to half of the total Fijian population, which shows a tendency to decrease, but which for some time has been kept about stationary through the strenuous care of the Government. Throughout the South Seas the indigenous races show the same inclination to decay, and it seemed to me when I left that part of the world that they would probably become Hinduised through the tide that was then flowing into Fiji, from whence it would spread to the other groups.

In my efforts to get these little Indian communities to govern themselves I was greatly assisted towards the end of my stay by my chief clerk and interpreter, Mr. B. R. Subawhal, who had studied at the Lahore University, and I think that when I left, the Indian settlers in my district were happy and contented. The last time I held Court at Tavua on the northern sea coast, where these people were principally congregated, they sent me a message that on the day before my final departure I was not to provide my own tea, as they quaintly put it. On that afternoon the whole of the free Indian settlers came to the Court House in gala dress bringing tea, biscuits, fruit, cigars, ginger-beer, sweet-meats and all sorts of things which they presented to me, together with a plated tea and coffee service, and a silver manicure set for my wife. I took it as a very great tribute of their affection as I was leaving them for good, and they could have no hope of any favour from me in the future.

Subsequently Indian lawyers and agitators arrived and stirred up sedition and discontent. By their machinations a Commission was sent down from India to inquire as to the condition of their people in Fiji. It was composed, I believe, mostly of the class who are now so arrogantly demanding equal status throughout the Empire, and

they reported adversely and recommended that immigration in Fiji should be stopped. It was a most unjust decision, as nowhere were Indians more fairly treated. After that some of Gandhi's adherents appeared upon the scene and there were riots and strikes which were suppressed mainly by the loyalty of the Fijians who everywhere volunteered as special constables.

In February, 1921, the Indians from Nandronga in the west as far as my old district in the north went on a lightning strike—the hands in the fields, the cattle keepers, the workers in the sugar mills, and the domestic servants. Ladies were deserted by their ayahs, and the children were deprived of milk through the abandonment of their charges by the dairymen. At Mba, a large and flourishing place where there is a large central sugar factory, operations were completely paralysed. The planters in their perplexity went to the District Commissioner. He with a happy flash of genius called in the local Fijian chiefs to aid him by their advice. They at once took the bull by the horns and called upon their people to volunteer to come to the rescue of their white brethren. They issued a manifesto that they understood that Britain always stood by those in trouble, and now was the time to show that they themselves were true Britons and members of the Empire. The result was that the able-bodied Fijians took the places of the strikers in the fields and mills, and milked the cows whilst their womenfolk turned to and helped their white sisters as nurses and house servants. It was a splendid action on their part, as the Mba people are a wealthy community, deriving a large income from rents of their fertile lands, and as a rule do not do much in the way of work. Their timely aid broke the strike and caused the Indians to resume work.

There is hope that the latter are beginning to see their folly. Some twelve hundred malcontents who clamoured to be sent back to India have speedily discovered that they were faced with their old state of starvation, and have implored to be allowed to return to Fiji, and a number of them came back last November in the big British-India steamship *Chenab*. May this prove an augury of a happier state of affairs, and that the Indians will realise how well off they can be in Fiji. Should they resume coming in numbers it will be profoundly interesting to watch their spread and development in the South Sea groups, which offer such splendid chances to the overcrowded and poverty-stricken masses of the great peninsula of Hindustan.

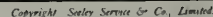
In justice to a great many of the Indians it should be added that the extremists coerced them into joining the strikes by threats of



death. Many of them, especially the domestic servants, were deeply attached to their masters and mistresses, and although they complied outwardly in the day time with the leaders' orders, at night they returned to perform the household duties. Many of my friends have had Indians in their employ for nearly twenty years, and those of us who go back to the scene of our labours are generally looked up by their old servants, who ask to be taken on again. My own cook was with me for thirteen years, and I left him established upon a small farm. Now, alas ! he has gone the way of all flesh, but all who visited Nandarivatu will remember the faithful Ferdinand and his great culinary skill.

The limit of space allowed me has, I fear, been exceeded, and I must now come to the End of the Way. So, as we say in Fiji, "*Sa mothe yani, Saka*," which, as "*Saka*" applies to either sex, means "Farewell, ladies and gentlemen."

Shewing Viti Levu, the larger of the two main Islands of the Fiji Group and with insets of Tholo North & East and the South Pacific Ocean.





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